THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

McGINNIS

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THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

BY

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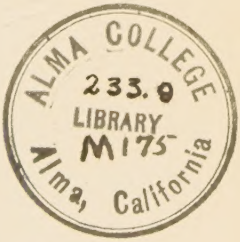
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE
MOST REVEREND JOHN IRELAND, D.D.

Quod invenerunt in Ecclesia tenuerunt; quod didicerunt, docuerunt; quod a patribus acceperunt, hoc filiis tradiderunt.
— ST. AUG. *C. Jul.* II, 34.



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TO

THE DEAREST ONES ON EARTH

HIS PARENTS

THIS WORK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY

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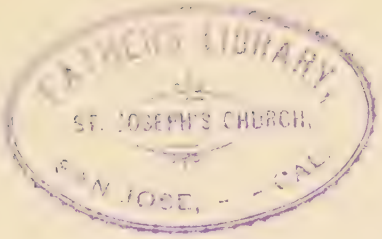

INTRODUCTION

BY THE

Most Rev. John Ireland, D.D.

ARCHBISHOP OF ST. PAUL

Few other tenets of Catholic belief and practice have been combated by the religious revolutionists of the sixteenth century with such persistent violence as that of "The Communion of the Saints"; yet few other tenets of Catholic belief and practice are so solidly grounded in Scripture and Tradition, or afford to the Christian soul so much sweetness of thought, so much hopefulness of life and action.

For ages the Apostles' Creed reëchoed through Christendom—"I believe in . . . the Communion of the Saints"; and to this article of the Creed solemn significance was given in universal ritualistic observance. Suddenly all was changed. "Justification by faith alone," the vital, though most erroneous principle of the new religion, was the argument for the exclusion of all secondary or mediate intercession. The Saints, those on earth or those in Heaven, it was said, must be silenced. Intervention on their part is needless. It is injurious to the Saviour of Calvary. It indicates either in the Saviour insufficiency of power and merit, or in the believer insufficiency of personal appropriation of the fullness of salvation proffered by Him to

mankind. Henceforward, the article in the Creed — "I believe . . . in the Communion of the Saints" — was to be a mere verbal expression, void of substantial meaning or living reality.

Much more — that the Saints be once forever ejected from prerogatives and privileges heretofore accorded to them, war was waged against their names and memories, against things whatsoever that might recall them to the Christian mind, or suggest recognition of their deeds of holiness. The doctrine of "The Communion of the Saints," as interpreted and reduced to practice by the Catholic Church, before and after the so-called "Reformation," was distorted and calumniated to the end that seen only under a vile and blackened image, it be abominated the more cordially, and buried the more deeply in abiding oblivion. The recognition of the Saints, as known in the Catholic Church, it was said, is rank superstition, degraded idolatry: to invoke their intercession, to venerate their virtues, to picture them in stone or on canvas, is the revival of olden paganism. Thus inaugurated, opposition to the Saints travelled down the centuries, though here and there somewhat shorn of its asperity as justice and common sense were allowed a hearing. The opposition lives to-day. Even to-day the Saints need to be defended. Misrepresentation must be denied, and truth set forth in its full armor of defense.

What is "The Communion of the Saints"? It is the fellowship of mutual love and help among the sons of Christ, members of His mystic body, the Church, whether still battling for salvation on earth, or reigning in bliss in Heaven, or enduring for a time the cleansing fires of Purgatory.

"There is no other name under Heaven given to man, whereby he must be saved"—no other name than that of Jesus, Redeemer and Saviour. Jesus is sole Redeemer, sole Mediator, the sole One, capable of bringing God to man, and man to God—this, certainly, the indubitable and uncontestable teaching of the Christian dispensation. None may doubt this teaching: none may set up, in doctrine or practice, aught to impair, in slightest iota, its over-mastering integrity. The supremacy of Jesus, as Redeemer and Saviour, was at all times the solemn asseveration of the Christian religion: it is to-day the solemn asseveration of the Catholic Church.

Whence, then, the intercessory function attributed to the Saints by the Catholic Church, clearly implied, the Church teaches, in the article of the Apostles' Creed—"I believe . . . in the Communion of the Saints"? We answer: From the free-willed ordering of the Redeemer and Saviour Himself, due altogether to His love and merciful condescension.

In the Christian dispensation love is supreme. The whole dispensation had its birth in God's eternal love for mankind: its whole course through time was to be the outward effusion of this love. As one of the effects of this love, the Incarnate Word willed that men be united to Him in closest, most intimate bond, even to become, as it were, members of His own body: "Now," writes St. Paul, "you are the body of Christ, and members of member." And, then, as the consequence of their union with Himself, He willed that they be united with one another, even to become members of one another: "So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." And, further, in result of their mutual love,

He ordered that they help one another: "That there might be no schism in the body, but the members might be mutually careful one for another." Thence the privilege of the members to intercede one for another. As a token of His love for His members, as an encouragement to them to love one another, He, the Head, authorizes the members to take, through petition, one for another graces from the divine treasury, and in this manner, in a degree otherwise impossible, to be mutually "careful one for another." "The Communion of the Saints," in its intercessory function, is one of the many beauteous blossomings of that mysterious love for mankind which bade the eternal Word from Heaven to Bethlehem, from Bethlehem to Calvary.

In the prerogative of intercession given to the members of the body of Christ no shadow is there of infringement upon the mediatorship of the one Saviour: no shadow of substitution of human for divine merit. The Saints offer prayers that through His love and mercy the merits of the Saviour be applied to fellow-members of the same mystic body. When we address the Saints, we ask for their intercession. We say to them: "Pray for us." Never to the Saints do we say: Grant us grace, grant us salvation. To grant grace and salvation is the privilege solely of Him who merited grace, who alone is entitled to dispose of it. Before Him the Saints are as having nothing: outside of Him the Saints, however high in favor, are powerless of will and void of hand to help us.

But why in any manner bring the Saints into action? Why not at once mount to the Source of grace, and there without aid from other creatures take immediate draught from its all-copious flow? No absolute need,

indeed, is there of the company of the Saints, when we present ourselves before the Great Mediator: to Him the road is always open: alone we may travel it: alone we often do travel it. Yet, there is a signal advantage in approaching Him hand in hand with fellow-members of His mystic body. The Great Mediator is pleased when His members put into practice His mandate that they love one another, that they be mutually "careful one of the other." And, then, our prayers for love and mercy reach the Throne of Grace, worthier and more compelling when mingled with the prayers of others, nearer and dearer to Jesus. Slight our personal value: poor and weak our claims upon the divine treasury. The prayers of the Saints united with our prayers, the deeds of the Saints are made ours. Not we, unworthy ones, who then pray, but those more beloved of God, whose titles to a hearing He more readily acknowledges.

What, again, "The Communion of the Saints"? It is the veneration of the Saints — the gift of honor to the celestial beauty resplendent in them, to the graces by which they are enriched in reward of sublime virtues put into practice, of noble deeds done in the service of the Sovereign Master.

Again, misrepresentation and calumny. The veneration of the Saints, it was asserted, is a derogation in favor of the creature from the supreme worship due to the Creator — a sacrilegious reaction from the monotheism of true religion to the polytheism of pre-Christian paganism.

God alone is Creator and Sovereign Master: to Him alone is given such adoration and worship, as would imply in its object supreme sovereignty. So far as

the terms, adoration and worship, have come to mean the recognition of supreme sovereignty, adoration and worship ascend only to God. To think or to act otherwise, were, indeed, idolatry, the reaction from Christian truth to pagan polytheism. But how far from this perverseness must we not account the veneration of the Saints, as it is believed and acted upon in the Catholic Church? In the Catholic Church the veneration of the Saints is nought else than the recognition of the sparklings of divine truth and goodness that constitute sainthood — sparklings from the eternal Fount of all truth and all goodness, the eternal and Almighty God — sparklings to be admired and revered as proceeding from God and imaging in the Saints God's own infinite essence. In its immediate object honor paid to the Saints is partial and secondary: in ultimate analysis its object is God Himself whom we honor, when, for His sake, we honor His servants and beneficiaries. The most exalted of the Saints, the Virgin Mary, receives veneration only because of the choice made of her to be the Mother of the Incarnate, and of the copious graces following upon this choice: "For behold all generations shall call me blessed, because He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His name." By the veneration of the Saints, nothing, assuredly, is taken from the supreme worship due to the Almighty God: rather, it is an ungracious and unwarranted shortening of that supreme worship, to refuse the honor of love and reverence to those whom God is delighted to honor, in whom glows resplendent the reflex of His power and mercy.

By Protestantism the Saints were bidden to depart

from the life of Christendom. Their shrines were pillaged; their relics cast to the winds; their images forbidden in homes and public places; their names condemned to oblivion. Poor at once was the world of Protestantism in solaces and comforts of the supernatural life.

To those who comprehend the teachings of the Catholic Church with regard to "The Communion of the Saints," and in mind and heart conform with it, there come sweetest joyousness and most precious inspiration.

We are made to live in society — to be mutually helpful to one another in giving and in receiving. Solitariness is unbearable. It is written: "Woe to him that is alone; for when he falleth, he hath none to pick him up." In the natural order God created us one for the other; we are one to the other intermediaries of His gifts. Why were it different in the supernatural order? Why, there, where lie our dearest interests, where the best of our being finds its highest complement, should separateness be decreed, intercommunion of love and service forbidden?

Happily the truth remains: denials of men are powerless against the teachings of the Church of Christ. "The Communion of the Saints" remains. Death snatches from us our loved ones. Affrighted, we cry out: shall we not again know them, not again be known by them? Across the grave that hides their mortal remains, arises the voice of Christian faith: Death has not ravished them from you: only from bodily vision have they gone: their closeness, now the exclusive closeness of soul to soul, is intimate as never before. Through God's gracious love, souls on earth live amid souls in Heaven, amid souls in Purgatory;

souls in Heaven help us by their prayers; souls in Purgatory are helped by ours. The gloom of the grave vanishes: "Death is swallowed up in victory: O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"

The eyes of faith bear us through the portals of Paradise. There pass in glorious review the hosts of God's elect, men and women of every family of mankind, of every condition of human life, who, once, in all forms of circumstances, amid trials and temptations, held themselves pure and holy, and now, in reward of loyalty to the laws of the Sovereign Master, live in never-ending bliss. What we are, they were: what they are, we are called to be, on the condition that to-day we be what yesterday they were. The Saints of Heaven are exemplars to be copied into our lives; over and above this, they are helpers, ceaselessly invoking upon us divine blessings, ceaselessly offering to the Great Dispenser of grace their well-earned rewards in substitution for our coldness of heart and weakness of effort. This the joyousness of "The Communion of the Saints"; this the stimulus from it so to live, so to battle and triumph, that we be to-day saints on earth, saints to-morrow in Heaven.

We are sons of our ideals. Tell me whom you admire, whom you love and speak of, and I will tell what you are. The nation portrays in statue and painting its great men, noted for prowess and unselfish civism: it seeks to create a posterity that will rival them in deeds of service. In like manner and for like reason the Church, intent on the sanctification of souls, on the upbuilding of God's Kingdom on earth, the mirror of God's Kingdom in Heaven, makes effort to enliven in the souls of its members the remembrance

of its saints and heroes. Its loyalty to its saints and heroes proves it to earth and to Heaven: the doctrine of "The Communion of the Saints" responds to the deepest and truest instincts of human nature: it responds to the clearest teachings and traditions of divinely-given revelation.

As it is to-day in the Catholic Church with regard to "The Communion of the Saints," so it was throughout all Christian ages. As it is to-day in Catholic temples, so it was in the Catacombs, the home of Christ's earliest martyrs and confessors. What the adornment of the rude tufa walls of the Catacombs? The Cross of Calvary, the Maid of Bethlehem and her divine infant, the Patriarchs of the Old Testament, the Apostles of the New. What the voice emerging from the brick or marble, closing the tombs of martyrs and confessors? The voice of prayer that the departed be in peace with God, that in Heaven they intercede for friends on earth. What see we in the Catholic temples of to-day? The Cross; statues and paintings of the Virgin Mother; statues and paintings of the Saints of one or of the other of the nineteen centuries of Christ's reign on earth. And what there hear we? First, chants of supreme adoration to Him, to whom alone supreme adoration is due, solemn intonations of sacrificial worship in honor of Him to whom alone sacrifice may be offered — and, then, converse of love and reverence with the Saints of Heaven, humble supplication for solace to God's servants in Purgatory. Where in Christendom to-day would the martyrs and the confessors of the Catacombs be at home, were they now to revisit the earth? Assuredly, in the temples of the Catholic Church — there and there only. The Catholic Church makes no alteration

in its doctrines and practices — no alteration in its doctrine and practices with regard to "The Communion of the Saints."

"The Communion of the Saints" calls for deep and serious study — so important the place it holds in the Christian faith, so rich its fruitage in Christian life. Hence the value to religious literature of the book I now present to the reading-public — "The Communion of the Saints," by the Rev. Charles F. McGinnis, of St. Thomas College, St. Paul.

It is an instructive and timely book. As none other that I know of it provides us with a comprehensive and scholarly exposition of "The Communion of the Saints." The doctrine of the Church is stated in precise and unmistakable terms. Equivocations of words, from which this doctrine has suffered, are cleared away: subterfuges under which opposition has taken refuge, are effectively put aside. Argument from reason and common sense mingles with argument from Scripture and Tradition in explanation and defense. Nor is the ascetic side of the doctrine lightly passed over. Cullings, too, from history and dramatic descriptions of local sceneries abound — investing every chapter with vivid life-coloring, adding to the more serious themes the charm of the imagination, so as to make the perusal of the whole volume a task no less agreeable than it is illuminating and instructive.

In the interest of Christian truth and holiness, I bespeak for the work of Rev. Charles F. McGinnis — "The Communion of the Saints" — a wide circle of readers, a welcome it richly deserves.

PREFACE

The idea of the present work first suggested itself to the author more than ten years ago. He felt persuaded that a short treatise on the subject of the Communion of Saints would prove a useful addition to present-day Catholic literature. Within the past fifty years certain branches of the English Church seem to have awakened to the truth of the doctrine as professed by the Catholic Church from the beginning. Not a few works have appeared which indicate that a reversal of feeling from sixteenth century standards has set in among those outside the Church.

The stress of more urgent duties has retarded the publication of this treatise until the present day. Although keenly alive to its imperfections, the author has ventured to present his work to the public, in the expectation that it would fill a real, or apparent, gap in the available English literature on this important subject. A patient research through a large number of volumes published in the past three centuries revealed the unwelcome fact that many quotations relating to the subject in hand could not be verified from the references appended. Hence, he went to the original sources for all his material. A very few minor quotations from standard authors have been given in the notes, and the authority and source cited.

As regards the footnotes, this work will be found to be at variance with the prevalent practice of omitting all or nearly all secondary references. The only

reason for their appearance here is the belief that their importance and usefulness justified their being quoted in full. It was thought better to give the original text in many cases, as the substance of the passages appeared in the body of the work. Of the wisdom or folly of this course the reader may judge.

The division of the subject into two parts is entirely arbitrary; and it was chosen in the hope that the exposition of this consoling dogma would thereby appear more rounded and complete. The amount of material to be found relating to the Communion of Saints is so vast, that preference was given to the documents of the early Church, since these same documents form the foundation of all later development.

Next to the love of Christ, no other phase of early Christian worship stands out more prominently than the fellowship of the Saints. The primitive Church is permeated with this spirit: she lives in ever-present communion with her departed children, and the beneficent effects of this spiritual union act and react upon the whole body. The Church to-day stands in need of as much strength and help from on high as she did when dragged before the Cæsars, or cast as a dainty morsel before the fell denizens of the jungle. To promote trust and confidence in the impetration of the brave champions of old is the main motive and object of this humble effort.

The author wishes publicly to acknowledge his deep indebtedness for the encouragement given him by the Most Rev. John Ireland, D.D., Archbishop of St. Paul, and for the preface with which the distinguished Churchman has deigned to grace this work. He desires also to express his gratitude to the Rev. Ber-

nard Feeney, to the Very Rev. Dr. Schaefer, Rector of St. Paul Seminary, and to the Rev. Dr. Seliskar, librarian of the same institution.

St. Thomas College, July 1, 1912.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

PART I

INVOCATION AND INTERCESSION

CHAPTER I

WORSHIP AND ADORATION

Nostra natura, quando peccò tota
Nel seme suo, da queste dignitadi
Come di paradiso, fu remota.

. . . . . .

E tutti gli altri modi erano scarsi
Alla giustizia, se 'l Figluol di Dio
Non fosse umiliato ad incarnarsi.— *Dante.*[1]

In that quaint mélange of subtle thought and keen analysis, *Sartor Resartus,*[2] Thomas Carlyle crystallizes with deft touch the various ideas which form the basis and burden of proof in this work. Commenting on that mental communion of thought which invisibly binds together the intellects of all ages, he says: "Beautiful it is to understand and know that a

[1] "Your nature, which entirely in its seed
Transgress'd, from these distinctions fell, no less
Than from its state in Paradise.

. . . . . .

And for his justice, every method else
Were all too scant, had not the Son of God
Humbled himself, to put on mortal flesh."

—*Paradiso,* canto VII.

[2] *Organic Filaments.*

Thought did never yet die; that as thou, the originator thereof, hast gathered it and created it from the whole Past, so thou wilt transmit it to the whole Future. It is thus that the heroic heart, the seeing eye of the first times, still feels and sees in us of the latest: that the Wise Man stands ever encompassed and spiritually embraced, by a cloud of witnesses and brothers, and there is a living, literal Communion of Saints, wide as the World itself, and as the History of the World." This "Thought, encompassed and spiritually embraced by a cloud of witnesses and brothers," we shall endeavor to show in the present case, as a deep undertone now soft and murmuring, now compelling in an uninterrupted crescendo, but always struck from the harmonious depths of the purest font of Catholic teaching — the Communion of Saints.

The doctrine of the Atonement cannot possibly be understood in its fullest and truest sense if limited to the sole, actual fact of the remission of sin. To view it in this restricted light is to curtail the efficacy of the Passion. True, Christ came into the world, "that the world might be saved by Him." [3] This was the primary and the main motive of His coming. But He did more. He took an active part in the up-building of His Church, and became "the head of the body, the Church." [4] Now, "we are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." [5] Wherefore, with a perfect sense of the fitness of his request, the Apostle on this basis beseeches the Romans, "through our Lord Jesus Christ and by the charity of the Holy Ghost, that you help me in your prayers for me to God." [6] Nay more, as a characteristic trait of a faith-

[3] *John* iii, 17.
[4] *Col.* i, 18.
[5] *Rom.* xii, 5.
[6] *Rom.* xv, 30.

ful follower of Christ, he inculcates on them: "By all prayer and supplication praying at all times in the spirit; and in the same watching with all instance and supplication for all the saints," [7] thus promoting a perfect spiritual harmony by means of mutual solicitude and efficacious impetration.

This was, in a way, one of the obligations incumbent upon them as members of a grand society. For the elements of a society properly so-called consist in a union of will and of intellect tending towards a common goal.[8] Christ is the source and font of all good that may be found in this society, for with divine assurance He has declared, 'without Him we can do nothing,' [9] for in Him "dwelleth the fulness of the divinity"; and He is our "mediator and advocate with the Father." [10]

We behold the Christian society, consequently, as a vast fabric of which the corner-stone is Christ.[11] He it is who gives solidity and permanency to the structure, for He will be with it all days.[12]

This society again is an organism, a vital, living being, whose head is Christ, "from whom the whole body, being compacted and fitly joined together, by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in charity." [13] The vitality which flows from the head, which is Christ, invigorates, and vivifies, and nourishes those separate parts, leaving always a certain sphere of action not in-

[7] *Eph.* vi, 18.
[8] Taparelli, *Dritto Naturale,* vol. I, Dissert. II, n. 304.
[9] *John* xv, 5.
[10] *Heb.* xii, 24; I *John,* ii, 1.
[11] *Eph.* ii, 20.
[12] *Matt.* xxviii, 20.
[13] *Eph.* iv, 15–16.

compatible with the liberty and free motion of each part. All this by no means precludes the possibility of individual members assisting in their own limited and circumscribed way other members of the same organism, but always understood in virtue of power communicated from the center and source of all energy in that vast organism.

In this way it is Christ who operates in and through the individual component parts of the whole, even when they exert their own faculties and direct their re-enforced energies and efforts towards the good of any particular portion or member of the whole body. In much the same way does the life which is in the vine differentiate its operations by producing with the same force and power, leaf, stem, grape, and stalk.

Or again. Imagine a mighty dynamo which is the center of a complex and inter-dependent series of wheels, shafts, pistons, and valves. Each part acts in virtue of an energy not inherent, but supplied from the terrific power of the main current. No engineer would admit that the necessity or efficacy of the dynamo is in the least diminished by the fact that the several parts of the complicated machinery act or react one upon the other. For he would with accurate and positive knowledge trace their various operations and co-related actions back to the main power, without derogating from or minimizing the efficacy of that same power. Applying this analogy, which is founded upon a logical deduction from the comparisons and figures used by our Lord,[14] and in the place of inanimate, mechanical parts, supply a human intelligence

[14] *John* xv, 5, 9, 12; xiii, 34. Cf. *John* xii, 46 with *Matt.* v, 14; Christians are *lux* by participation. See also *John* i, 24, etc.

and a will [15] endowed with the determining power of free selection, and there is a just estimate and a correct idea of the operations contained in the Communion of Saints.[16]

Now, this life-giving energy apprehended and directed by a rational intellect and a free will, cannot be understood as essentially confined to a certain class or division of those who participate in its infinite fecundity, as we shall endeavor to elucidate further when speaking of Purgatory. For as St. Augustine remarks on this point, "The souls of the faithful departed are not separated from the Church, which even now is the kingdom of Christ." [17] Hence the mention which is made in the liturgy for the faithful departed who may stand in need of *refrigerio,* to use

[15] "Lo maggior don che Dio per sua larghezza
Fesse creando, e alla sua bontate
Più conformato, e quel ch' ei più apprezza,
Fù della volontà la libertate,
Di che le creature intelligenti,
E tutte e sole, furo e son dotate."
— *Div. Com. Par.* c. v.

[16] "Where there is an organic and living union there is found a vital circulation and a community of good; and the stronger is that union the greater will be the vital energy and common good. This fact is presented to us in an irrefragable manner in the plant, the animal, and in man himself taken in the individual. The same is true of the family, where everything is in common between husband and wife, and between parents and children; the reason thereof being the bond that unites the two spouses and their common mode of life. The same law is equally applicable to society, be it ever so imperfect or elementary, and the standard of so-called society is merely the measure by which all the goods, the talents, and the actions of the various members serve to augment the good of the whole body. Why then shall we not say the same of the Church? Is there in the whole world a society that possesses a unity more powerful and compact? What therefore is to be wondered at if among the faithful who compose this society we find a common interest and a communication of benefits and blessings that come from this union?"— Beraille, *Le Catechisme Romain,* t. ii, p. 672.

[17] *De Civ. Dei,* xx, c. 9.

the phraseology of the Catacombs. Still, the Doctor of Hippo always refers all spiritual efficacy back to its primal source, which is Christ, as when he says that the wonders and good deeds wrought by the martyrs, "are accomplished by their prayers and intercession, not by their own inherent power." [18] St. John Chrysostom assigns the above liturgical custom back to the apostolic age when he declares: "It was not without good reason that the Apostles decreed that in the tremendous Mysteries commemoration should be made of the departed." [19]

In this connection I cannot but quote a certain Protestant author who shows at times a leaning towards the teaching of the old Church, but allows his prejudices frequently to usurp the rightful position of reason. Dr. Gilbert, in contrast to the two Fathers just cited, remarks, in a work that approaches Catholic doctrine in several points: "Protestants are accustomed to doing their own praying. They do not hire ministers to present by proxy their holiest aspirations to the Almighty. If they shall speak to the Lord concerning their dead it will be the utterance of their own hearts and not a formal and mechanical ritual-Mass by another only remotely concerned." [20] Could there be plainer proof of the emasculated nature of Protestant worship, a creed which ignores the central idea of divine worship, namely, sacrifice?

The subject of the Communion of Saints is a theme upon which the writers — the Doctors and Fathers — of the Church have loved to dwell, inspired as they were by the very essence of Christianity. The Church

[18] "Ut quae per martyres fieri dicuntur, eis orantibus tantum et impetrantibus, non etiam operantibus fiant."— Ibid. xxii, c. 9.
[19] *Hom.* 69, ad populum Antioch.
[20] Gilbert, *The Hereafter and Heaven*, ch. viii.

came forth crimson-hued and glorious from the wounded side of the dying Savior. She stood forth in full panoply and radiant with a dazzling loveliness that beckoned the nations from afar, made them oblivious to the delights of a carnal and sensual paganism, and thrilling them with the magic touch of spiritual transformation, sent them rejoicing on the road to suffering, tortures and death. The ravishing beauty of the Spouse of Christ struck the eyes of the world in a burst of effulgence that gradually, as they became accustomed to it, resolved itself into a galaxy of distinct and ineffable charms, which, under the keen scrutiny and steadfast gaze of her ardent admirers, assumed the individual proportions of perfect parts of a perfect whole. This does not indicate by any manner of means that the first Christians were deficient in their knowledge or appreciation of the religion which they sealed in their blood.[21] The idea intended is that as time added distance to the first preaching of the Gospel, so did the inner meanings of that Gospel unfold themselves and stand out in such bold relief as to appear striking, but not isolated, in their individuality.

In this unfolding process[22] the various beliefs contained in Christ's teaching were not changed, nor improved upon, neither were they discarded to give place to other and newer doctrines; but some things contained therein in a state of embryo were rendered sus-

[21] "In the Deposit of Faith have come down to us, under a twofold form, Oral Tradition and the writings of the New Testament. . . . The Church simply transmits oral tradition to us as the voice of the Apostles, without attempting to tell us at what hour this or that inspired word was spoken."— Fouard, *St. Peter*, p. 231, Eng. ed., 1903.

[22] The word evolution is not used here, as it appears often to indicate a substantial change.

ceptible to a natural development which, under the fostering care and inspired guidance of the Mistress of Truth, surrounded each tenet of belief with a distinctive halo.[23] It is in this sense only that we are permitted to speak or reason of development in the doctrine of the Church. New doctrines are never proclaimed in matters of faith, just as new dogmas are never formulated.[24] But the Church from time to time recognizes and shapes and imparts definite outlines and form to various homogeneous growths of doctrine that all spring naturally from the tree of life which is the deposit of the Faith. Such, to cite an example, was the doctrine of Indulgences, which was actually contained in the original deposit, but was later on drawn up in definite form and presented clearly and distinctively as we have it to-day. Such, again, was the doctrine of Purgatory. And such in an eminent sense was the dogma of the Communion of Saints, which was afterwards raised to the dignity of a distinct place in the Creed.

This belief, which forms the groundwork of a

[23] Speaking of devotions in the Church, Fr. Faber has this beautiful thought: "In nothing is the beauty of the Church more ravishing, or its disclosures more intimately divine. Full of divine instincts, its worship grows with all the exuberance of a tropical forest. It puts forth its devotions with all the freedom of a tree which has liberty to spread on all sides. There is nothing to hinder its development, nothing to hamper its genius, nothing to disfigure its natural forms and amplitudes of beauty. The diversity of its blossoms is astonishing. Ages roll on. None of the old blossoms wither or fall off. Yet new varieties are added."— *Devotion to the Precious Blood*, ch. 6.

[24] "If Christianity is a fact, and impresses an idea of itself on our minds and is a subject-matter of exercises of the reason, that idea will in course of time expand into a multitude of ideas, connected and harmonious with one another, and in themselves determinate and immutable, as is the objective fact itself which is thus represented."— Card. Newman, *Essay on Development*, ch. ii, § 1.

magnificent epic which might be written on the sorrows of human life, rests on a solid basis of sound reason and pure theology, namely, the doctrine of Merit.

When Christ emphatically declared, "Without Me you can do nothing," [25] He spoke as God, and in the most sweeping terms. He indicated the source and font of all action, energy, and life. He focused the forces of the universe on the point whence they drew their power. More than this. He enunciated a truth that is the foundation of all theology on the subject of merit. For theology teaches us that in the supernatural order grace is the foundation, the keystone of all merit. This grace, or love, it is which draws us close to Almighty God, and crowns us with His friendship, without which all works are dead spiritually. The Angelic Doctor, with that perspicuity of expression and depth of comprehension that have earned him the above title, explains this thought thus.

"A human act," says the holy Doctor, "is meritorious first and principally by divine appointment, inasmuch as the act is said to be meritorious of that good to which man is divinely ordained; secondly, as regards free will, insomuch as man possesses above other creatures the faculty of acting as a free agent. Now in regard to each of these points, merit consists eminently in love. For eternal life is centered in the fruition of God. The tendency of the human mind towards the enjoyment of divine goodness is essentially an act of love; and it is through this love that the acts of other virtues are directed to this end, since all other virtues are governed by charity.

[25] *John* xv, 5.

Hence it is that we merit life eternal chiefly through love. In the same manner it is clear that what is done through love is pre-eminently voluntary; wherefore, even according to this condition of freedom of act which is necessary to merit, it may be said that merit consists principally in love." [26]

Here we have, then, epitomized the conditions that render a human act worthy of merit, that it be voluntary, and that it spring from the divine source of love, or grace.[27] Love of God, therefore, is the perennial fountain whence flow the invigorating and life-giving waters of merit, that scatter in plenteous and bountiful streams throughout the sweetly-scented garden of the Church. The elect draw nigh to these purifying and salutary streams, drink in long and deep draughts of ecstatic delights, and being strengthened and fortified, the stronger help the weaker by conveying to them copious measures of this divine abundance. The closer they approach to the source of this heaven-given bounty the more are they thrilled and transformed by its marvelous virtue. As St. Bernard says: "God is love, and the more intimately one is joined to God the more abundantly is he filled with love." [28]

When the soul is invested with grace it becomes a denizen of the supernatural state; its actions whilst in this state are the acts of a being officially connected, so to say, with the supreme order, and when directed towards God they bear upon themselves the seal of the divine approval and acceptance. Love of God,

[26] *Sum. Theol.* I–II, q. cxiv, a. iv.

[27] The contrary opinion of Michael Baius was condemned with 78 other heretical propositions of his, by St. Pius V, in the Bull, *Ex Omnibus,* Oct. 1, 1567. *Prop.* 15.

[28] *Serm. 27* in Cant.

with which the motives underlying these actions are impregnated, elevates them above the order of mere nature, and renders them acceptable to the Almighty as a pledge of loyalty to Him, and at the same time places God Himself in the position of a debtor towards His own servants. Of course, strictly speaking, God cannot be the debtor of any man, but pre-supposing the divine will and desire to reward good works, God binds Himself by His own ordinance.[29] For this reason He repeatedly declares in Holy Writ that every work of man's doing, be it good or ill, shall draw down its just reward or punishment. In this manner He consoles His chosen people in their trying captivity. "Let thy voice cease from weeping, and thy eyes from tears; for there is a reward for thy work." [30] Their tears and sufferings, the sorrows and afflictions incident to their cruel exile, were to bear fruit and merit, "a reward for thy work," not merely a present or a gift, but a recompense commensurate with the work accomplished, and based on the standard of the sanctuary. But lest man might be prevailed upon to claim all right to this merit, we are reminded that God first drew His creature towards Himself in the bonds of love. "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee." [31]

This act of God drawing the soul towards Himself is not of such a nature as to force or to impair the free will of a rational creature who is thus drawn. For this freedom of will, united with the powers of rational comprehension, was the great distinctive

[29] *Sum. Theol.* 1. c. a. 1.
[30] *Jere.* xxxi, 16.
[31] L. c. v. 3 — Christ said: "No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him."— *John* vi, 44.

characteristic of intelligent man, and it gave him mastery over the whole material creation.

Since, however, the object of the will is good, in much the same way that the object of the intellect is truth, God, who is the highest Good and the Supreme Truth, by disclosing Himself under a somewhat more brilliant light than usual, brings the soul about to a closer proximity to its object, thus enabling it the more readily to attain that object. In this sense, then, does God draw the soul, while leaving it perfectly free in its choice, as is evidenced by the many examples of those who after being called fall away from grace.

If therefore love and grace form the central fire whence merit derives its divine warmth and efficacy, free will is the governing spirit which permits the soul to avail itself of this heavenly boon, or to reject it entirely. For, "If thou do well shalt thou not receive? but if ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door? but the lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it." [32] This was the alternative placed before Cain, and since then, before every human being. Scarcely may we hope to find a passage of Holy Writ more illuminating on this point than the above. It is the exercise of that dominion over sin that caused St. Paul to speak of his reward as a "crown of justice, which the Lord, the just judge," would eventually render unto him. The Psalmist was of like mind when he averred, "The Lord will reward me according to my justice," [33] and again, "the judgments of the Lord are true, and in keeping them there is a great reward." [34]

[32] *Gen.* iv, 7.
[33] *Ps.* xvii, 21.
[34] *Ps.* xviii, 10–12.— Cf. also *Matt.* v, 11–13; xvi, 27; I *Cor.* iii, 8.

Now this doctrine of merit, with its underlying principle of free selection and of proprietorship in the disposal of merits acquired, partly reveals to us the nature of the Communion of Saints, as will be demonstrated more fully in this First Part.

It would be futile to pursue our subject further without a definite and clear idea as to the exact nature and bearing of this dogma on the constitution of the Church. For this purpose it becomes imperative, even at the risk of appearing academic, to present a brief, but historical and philological résumé of the origin and growth of certain terms used in connection with this subject — terms and expressions that have time and again proved a stumbling-block in the minds of many sincere seekers after the truth. This is our reason and only apology for endeavoring to throw a clear and unmistakable light upon those sometimes obscure places on the path that leads to the light of perfect day.

It is an axiom of all ages that life consists in movement, progress. Objects endowed with life are never stationary. There is a continuous flow of energy, of vitality, of progressive motion. When this restless and ceaseless activity comes to a halt we declare that life is extinct, that death has intervened. This quality is applicable to all things which, metaphorically, are said to live; for it is precisely this condition which constitutes the metaphor.

That this principle is an ingredient in the complex nature of language it were puerile to attempt to prove. For a living tongue as distinguished from a dead language is one in which susceptibility to change stands out as a prominent feature. Words are made for man, to express his ideas, to embody in articulate or

written discourse the thoughts that dwell in the mind. For this reason words are used and adapted to the ever fluctuating vicissitudes of Time and changed conditions. As Pope tersely puts it:

> In words, as in fashions, the same rule will hold,
> Alike fantastic, if too new, or old.[35]

Who but can see the vast change in the same language when comparing, for example, the "Ayenbite of Inwit,"[36] or the Tales of Chaucer, with the poems of Tennyson or the works of Browning! In this manner are we to view with caution the meaning attached to certain terms in the course of their march adown the ages.

Among the words that the agitators of the sixteenth century flung in the face of Catholics, none other, perhaps, was more frequently on their lips than the much-abused word, adore.[37] This apparently harmless atom of speech was made to do yeoman service far beyond its strength on every occasion when question arose as to saints, images, or relics. Catholics were said to adore the blessed and their images:[38] adoration belongs to God alone; hence, Catholics were pagans. A rather crude weapon, but in its paralogical form,

[35] *Essay on Criticism,* part ii.

[36] The Again-bite (i. e., Remorse) of Conscience.— 14th century.

[37] The Greek Fathers and writers sometimes use the term, adore, in an inferior sense. In the VII Synod Bishop Leontius, of Cyprus, says: "He who honors a martyr, honors God; and he who adores God's Mother, worships God." Ὁ γὰρ τιμῶν τὸν μάρτυρα, τὸν θεὸν τιμᾷ· καὶ ὁ τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ προσκυνῶν, αὐτῷ τὴν τιμὴν προσάγει.— Mansi, *Conc.* t. xiii, col. 54.

[38] St. John Damascene says: "Worship is the symbol of veneration and honor." He adds that "latria is the worship shown to God, who alone by nature is worthy of worship. Then for the sake of God, we honor His saints and servants."—*Apologia* I, tr. Allies.

one that wrought widespread havoc throughout Europe, as the work of the modern Iconoclasts testifies.

The only secure criterion of certitude in a matter of philology is to delve into the works of writers of note in any particular period, scrutinize the manner and the sense in which they use a given word or phrase, and then compare it with the meaning of said word or phrase as disclosed from a careful analysis of same. From the fact that a given term considered in its root reveals a certain meaning it would be illogical to deduce therefrom an a priori argument that the particular significance has always attached to the word. No one surely would deny that the words *caritas, humilis,* and a host of others from the Latin, take on an entirely different meaning when used by the Fathers of the Church, from that in which they were known to the classic writers of Rome. Nor is there question as to whether the new significance be a corruption or not. For the rule laid down by the Master of epigram in his Art of Poetry has never been successfully challenged. Flaccus declares that the only correct standard of words and their proper significance is custom and usage.

> Multa renascentur, quae jam cecidere cadentque
> Quae nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,
> Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.[39]

Since the chief difficulties seem to arise in the Old Testament where *adore* is of very frequent occurrence, it will be perfectly permissible to examine what it really means in the Hebrew Scriptures.

[39] *Ars Poetica,* v. 70–73.

The Catholic position is that the *jus et norma loquendi* as disclosed in the custom of the authors of the Old Testament will be the determining factor to decide what is proper in the matter under discussion. If we find one and the same term used in the original text to indicate, variously, worship and respect shown to the Deity, as well as legitimate respect and veneration exhibited to a mere creature, it will be only fair to conclude that adoration is sometimes lawfully applied to a lesser person or object than God Himself.[40]

If there were but one such term employed in the original Hebrew our task would be an easy matter. But in truth there are not a few words used in the Old Testament to express that worship of the true God, which we call Latria; and these very same words are elsewhere employed to indicate obsequious deference to men or angels — an entirely lawful act. Lest, however, prolixity be imputed unto satiety, we shall content ourselves with an inspection of the principal words used most frequently. Without entering unnecessarily into grammatical subtleties, it may be remarked that flexibility is assured the Hebrew verb by seven forms, which thus allow a generous latitude in indicating shades of meaning.

In regard to these terms Buxtorf[41] thus sums up the matter: "The Hebrews make use of four verbs to indicate the act of honoring: השתחוה,[42] denotes the prostrating of the whole body; קדד, an inclination of the head; כרע, a bowing of the head with the up-

[40] It is surely not one and the same act of respect to bend the knee before the Blessed Sacrament, a pious image, a relic, or a prelate of the Church.

[41] Lexicon Heb. et Chald. s. v. בָּרַךְ.

[42] From שחה.

per part of the body; ברך, a bending of the knees."

To elucidate this subject to the best advantage it is well to recall the fact that adoration in its generic sense means nothing more than an act by which a person manifests his deep regard and veneration toward another, for some real or fancied excellence in that person. The word itself, adore, is from the Latin, and according to the general acceptation, is a compound of the preposition *ad,* to, or towards, and the substantive, *os,* mouth. It is traceable back to the ancient custom of exhibiting esteem or worship by bringing the hand to the mouth, and then extending it towards the object of this regard. It often indicates idolatrous worship, as Job alludes to when he says: "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon going in brightness: and my heart in secret hath rejoiced, and I have kissed my hand with my mouth; which is a very great iniquity, and a denial against the most high God."[43] The Greek equivalent is also similar to this, προσκύνησις,[44] being the term which the Scripture frequently uses to convey the idea of worship.

The essence of the act of adoration consists in the intention of the mind which accompanies the external

[43] *Job* xxxi, 26–27.—Cf. Tirinus, *Comment. in Sac. Script.* t. ii, in h. l. (Venice, 1738). Compare this with III *Kings* xix, 18.— This practice is still to be found among the Italian peasantry to show their veneration of relics and images. We have a vestige of it in the expression, "to throw a kiss"; and in the Latin, "oscula liberare," "basia jactare." Minucius Felix journeying together with his friends Octavius and Cæcilius to Ostia, to take the sea baths there, tells us: "Simulacro Serapidis denotato, ut vulgus superstitiosum solet, manum ori admovens (*Cæcilius*) osculum labiis impressit."—*Octav.* c. ii. *Pat. Lat.* III, 244.

[44] From προς, towards, and κυνέω, I kiss.

sign. This latter may be manifested by a bowing of the head, a genuflection, profound prostration, or other obsequious performance, to be judged and decided generally from circumstances or from custom.[45] With this evident and simple statement before the mind it seems incredible that so much uncertainty should have obtained in regard to worship.[46]

That the Jews accurately grasped this distinction and acted according to this right understanding of the subject of worship, true and false, is beyond the question of legitimate doubt to any person in the slightest degree acquainted with the history of that wonderful but unfortunate people. Surely when the Italian peasant wafts a kiss towards the statue or image of his favorite patron Saint he cannot be said to fall into the error of idolatrous worship mentioned by the patient old man in "the land of Hus."

The Psalmist filled with a holy joy at the thought of the intimate relation between the Almighty and His people, "for He is the Lord our God: and we are the people of His pasture,"[47] invites the children of God to adore that infinite Being: "Come, let us adore and fall down: and weep before the Lord that made us."[48] נשתחוה is the term he employs for this ado-

[45] Two pious travelers, Theodore and Theodosius (vii century), in a letter on the heresy of the Monothelites, tell us: "pergebamus illuc (i. e., to the Chersonesus) ad visitationem et adorationem ejus" (sc. of the holy martyr Theodore). Sirmondi, t. iii, col. 397, ed. Venice, 1728.

[46] The true sense of latria may be gleaned from the word *idolo-latria,* i. e., attributing to idols worship due to God, latria. Hence the old verse in Durandus:

Latria fit Domino, debetur dulia servo.
— *Rationale,* l. iv, c. 39, n. 2.

[47] *Ps.* xciv, 7.

[48] *Ps.* xciv (in Heb. xcv), 6.— Prot. version: "worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord."

ration, from the verb, שחה, *shachah,* to bow down before.

But when Bethsabee comes in before King David she "bowed herself and worshipped the King."[49] Here the same verb, ותשתחו, is employed to denote her worship of her lord; but surely it is not the worship meant in the psalm.

When Abraham became old he feared lest his son, Isaac, might remain in the land of Chanaan. So calling his elder servant, he commissioned him to go to Mesopotamia, to there seek a wife for Isaac. The faithful servant having followed instructions and found the girl, tells her brother Laban, "falling down I adored the Lord."[50] This act of adoration of Almighty God is expressed by the word ואקד, *vackkod,* which here without doubt refers to divine worship.

Joseph, concealing his real identity from his brothers, questions them as to the health of their father, Jacob. Having given assurance that their sire still lived and enjoyed good health, "bowing themselves, they made obeisance to him."[51] Now with all their former villainy it would still be unfair to impute to them an act of idolatrous worship of a man from whom they desired to purchase provisions, and to base this imputation on the use of the same word, ויקדו,[52] which Abraham's servant used to protest his fealty to the Most High. Evidently there must have been a difference of mental attitude if not

[49] III *Kings* (in Heb. I *Kings*), 1, 16.— Prot. version: "bowed, and did obeisance."

[50] *Gen.* xxiv, 48.— Prot. version: "I bowed down my head, and worshipped."

[51] *Gen.* xliii, 28.— Prot. version: "Bowed down their heads, and made obeisance."

[52] From same verb, קדד.

of expression between Abraham's servant and Joseph's brethren.

The term ברך, *barak,* reveals the same distinction, which necessarily must be supposed, in its various uses throughout the Old Testament. This word is rather flexible in meaning, signifying both to bless, and to kneel in obeisance.

After Solomon had carried out the will of his father, and had reared a dwelling place that God "might dwell there forever," [53] he erected a large platform and "stood upon it: then kneeling down . . . and lifting up his hands toward heaven, he said: O Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee in heaven nor in earth." [54] When he knelt down before God this act of worship is expressed by the word ויברך,[55] *vaïbrach,* and the good king doubtless intended the act of profound abnegation in a sovereign as a testimonial of his loyalty to the sovereign Lord and Ruler of all.[56]

On the other hand, the king, or Pharaoh, of Egypt, pleased at the wisdom and sagacity displayed by Joseph, accepted his advice, and with royal munificence placed the young Hebrew as governor over the land of Egypt, and second in dignity to the monarch himself. To give more éclat to the promotion he decorated Joseph in gorgeous fashion, "and he made him go up into his second chariot, the crier proclaiming that all should bow their knee before him, and that they should know that he was made governor

[53] II *Paral.* vi, 2.
[54] L. c. v. 13–4.— Prot. version: "kneeled down upon his knees."
[55] From ברך.
[56] *Apoc.* xix, 16.

over the whole land of Egypt."[57] The word used, אברך, *abrech,* is the same verb which informed us of Solomon's act of adoration to Almighty God, with the difference that the loyal subjects of King Pharaoh, whom probably they despised as a foreigner,[58] merely protested their civil or political allegiance to the new governor, with no intention of rendering to him divine homage.

Other words might be adduced in proof that adoration in the Old Testament is made to depend upon the intention independently of the action itself or the mode of grammatical expression.[59] These few examples, however, are typical of a large class, and indeed are grounded on the very basic principles of every tongue and of reason itself which makes speech but a vehicle of thought. As for the verb, כרע, *charah,* it is so intimately allied in every way with ברך, to bend the knees, and with בֶּרֶךְ, knee, that it were superfluous to add further examples.[60]

[57] *Gen.* xli, 43.— Prot. version: "Bow the knee." This is literal.

[58] Incidentally, this was a shrewd political move on the part of the king. For it seems that this Pharaoh was of the Hyksos', or Shepherd Kings' dynasty, a foreign element that had obtained power in Egypt, and was, in consequence, heartily detested by the natives. This move thus strengthened the king by having next to himself in power not a native Egyptian, who might use his advantage for the overthrow of this adventitious ruler, but rather a foreigner, as Joseph was, and one under obligation to the royal favor.

[59] Cf. the Chaldaic, עבד, *habad,* and פלח, *phelak,* in sense of, to serve. Another notable example is סגד, *procumbere.* In *Dan.* iii, 18, we have נסגד, "we will not adore," speaking of divine honors to a statue. And in *Dan.* ii, 46, Nabuchodonosor *worshipped* Daniel, סְגִד, not as a god, as is clear from v. 47.

[60] In *Ps.* xcv (Heb. xciv), 6, we have three principal verbs all used in the sense of adoration of God: נשתחוה ונכרעת נברכה באו, literally, come, let us fall down, and bow our heads, and bend our knees.

The distinction between honor to creatures and worship of the Deity is aptly put by St. Augustine: "He who adores, certainly honors; but he who honors, does not necessarily adore. For according to the Apostle the brethren prevent one another in honor, but assuredly they do not adore one another." [61]

That the essence of adoration consists therefore primarily in the will is evident if we consider that, for example, the soldiers of the Pretorium bowed down, indeed, and bent the knee before Christ, but their will was far from the notion of adoration.[62]

"Adoration, therefore, in the true Catholic sense of the term when applied to God is an act of supreme worship; used towards idols, it is idolatry; towards men, it is merely a civil act." [63] When at the election of a supreme Pontiff the Cardinals in conclave assembled prostrate themselves at the feet of one of their number and proclaim him Pope, this act is called adoration.[64]

[61] "Honorat enim omnis qui adorat, non autem adorat omnis qui honorat. Nam et fratres secundum Apostolum invicem se honore preveniunt, nec tamen invicem adorant."—*C. Serm. Arian.* c. 23.

[62] Formerly it was customary with some writers to oppose such passages as *Apocalypse* xix, 10, where St. John "fell down before the angel's feet, to adore him." Interpreters have differed in explaining this verse, but any way it is taken it rather favors the worship of angels. If understood of *latria*, we would have to suppose in the Apostle a crass ignorance in matters of faith, a defect apparent again shortly afterward (xxii, 9). The various interpretations given to the passage weaken the force of any objection that might be drawn therefrom.

[63] Cf. Bergier, *Diction. Théolog.* s. v. *Adoration.*

[64] We read of Gelimer, king of the Vandals, in Africa (534), that he was taken captive by Belisarius. "When they drew near the imperial throne he (Gelimer) laying aside the purple, and prostrate to the ground, was forced to adore Justinian. Belisarius also together with Gelimer, bowing down, did likewise." — Procopius Cæs. *De Bello Vandalico*, l. ii, c. 9. apud *Byzant. Hist. Scriptor.* t. i, p. 399, ed. Venice, 1729.

Catholic writers, following the example of the Fathers,[65] are wont to distinguish various degrees of worship. For the sake of precision the veneration offered to God has been styled Latria;[66] that shown the angels and saints is called Dulia;[67] while a special and higher degree of this latter when exhibited towards the Blessed Virgin, is termed Hyperdulia.[68] St. Augustine thus explains it: "When I wish to express in one word the worship due the Divinity I have recourse to the Greek, as the Latin seems to me deficient in this regard. Whenever our writers have found the word *Λατρεία* in Holy Writ they have rendered it, worship. But that worship which is due to creatures . . . is expressed in Greek by another word [*δουλεία*]: *λατρεία*, however, by the same writers is always or nearly always understood to be the worship which is due to God.[69] Hence when

[65] The early Fathers often use the word, adore, in the sense prevalent at the time. Cf. e. g. Lactantius, *Institut. Divinar.* ii, c. 2, seq.

[66] *Λατρεία*, from *λατρεύω* I serve; *λατρις*, a servant.

[67] *Δουλεία*, servitude.

[68] Some writers use the word, hyperdulia, when speaking of greater saints. Hyperdulia "maximis datur sanctis et Deo propinquis, ut gloriosae Virgini, Apostolis, et si qui sunt similis sanctitatis."—Card. Toleti, in *Sum. S. Thom.* iii, q. xxv, a. 1. This opinion is not commonly held.

[69] "Si saepe in Scriptura et in elegantibus nostris patribus adorationem quis dixerit pro cultu sive latria, quae in spiritu fit, sumi, non negamus; nam cum vox sit multae significationis, non potest non aliquando pro cultu adorationis in spiritu sumi. Adoratio enim est, cum venerationem, desiderium, et timorem significat: ita nos vestrum victoriosum et placidissimum imperium adoramus. Est adoratio quae tantummodo victoriam significat, quemadmodum Jacob adoravit Esau. Est quae gratiam notat, quomodo Abraham pro agro, quem accepit a filiis Heth (Gen. xxiii) in sepulcrum Sarae uxoris suae, adoravit illos. Rursus, qui sperant beneficium se accepturos a potentioribus, eos adorant, quemadmodum Jacob adoravit Pharaonem (Gen. xlvii). Hinc divina Scriptura dicens: 'Deum tuum adorabis, et illi soli cultum exhibebis', *adorabis* absolute ponit, neque dicit *soli* ut

there is merely a question of worship, it does not appear that it should always be taken in the sense of divine worship." [70]

The same holy Doctor, with that broad human view which ever distinguished him, gives this golden rule: "So long as we understand what was meant to be understood, it matters little what we call it." [71]

The Council of Trent (Sess. xxv) sums up the whole matter, and puts to rest any and all controversy as to the nature of our worship of God and of the Saints by declaring that, "we adore Christ, and we venerate the Saints." [72]

It will not perhaps be amiss to here sketch briefly the etymology and history of the word *Saint.* Originally this appellation arose as a descriptive term, much in the same way as any other of like nature. Just as a poet was one who cultivated the art of poetry, a lawyer, one who practised law: so a Saint was one given to the cultivation and practice of holiness.[73] Sanctity or holiness was the groundwork upon which the Saint built. In the Hebrew it signifies frequently, pious, merciful. "Holy, holy, holy" was the greeting to the Lord God of Israel.[74] The same term was applied to the angels, called Saints, by Zacharias.

significetur vox diversae notionis et aequivoca. Quam ob causam latriam uni Deo tribuimus."—Tarasius Patriarcha, *ep. ad Irenen et Constantium*, in Conc. vii (a. 787), act. vii. Mansi, t. xiii, col. 743.—Cf. also *ep. St. Anastasii,* Bishop of Theophile, read in sess. iv.—Mansi, xiii, 596.

[70] *De Civ. Dei,* l. x, c. i. Cf. also *C. Faust.* xxi, 22.

[71] *De Gen. ad lit.* c. iv.

[72] Cf. chapter on Sacred Images.

[73] Pagan usage approached this idea. Cicero, *Orat. pro Archia,* says: "Noster Ennius *sanctos* appellat poetas quod quasi deorum aliquo dono atque munere commendati nobis esse videantur."

[74] *Isaias* vi, 3.

"The Lord shall come, and all the Saints with Him." [75]

Allied with the idea of holiness was the notion of meekness and mercy towards others. This was expressed by חסיד, *chasid,* which is rendered by the Vulgate, *sanctus,* which the Douay version follows closely.[76] The Protestant Bible frequently uses *godly,* or *merciful,* in those places which really amount to the same as *holy,* in the sense of the various texts. The word Saint is also found in the King James version.[77] Since moreover spotless purity and freedom from stain are a requisite of holiness, we sometimes find the word טהור, *tahor,* used in this sense of holiness or sanctity. Hence where the Vulgate renders *sanctus,* the Douay at times has *holy,* and the Protestant, *clean.*[78] The Greeks comprehended the idea of sanctity under the term, ἅγιος, from ἁγίζω, I make sacred.

Throughout the Old Testament the term Saint, therefore, indicates holiness, whether applied to persons, places, objects or institutions. Persons are holy, because called to holiness of life, and in this sense St. Paul generally calls the faithful, Saints.[79] In the Apocalypse the term refers usually to those still upon earth; [80] and the ancients around the throne

[75] *Zach.* xiv, 5. See also *Deut.* xxxiii, 2.

[76] The Romans understood *sanctus* in the sense of *inviolabile,* without regard to morals. Cæsar, *De Bello Gall,* l. iii, says: "Legatos, quod nomen apud omnes nationes *sanctum* . . . fuisset."— Muratori, *Rer. Ital.,* iv, 242.

[77] V. g. *Ps.* xxxvii, 28; cxlix, 1, etc.

[78] *Ps.* xviii, 10 (Heb. and Prot. xix, 9).

[79] E. g. *Col.* i, 12; *Eph.* iv, 12; vi, 18; I *Cor.* xvi, 15; *Rom.* xv, 31; xii, 13, etc.

[80] V, 8; viii, 3, 4; xi, 18; xiii, 7, 10; xiv, 12; xvi, 6; xvii, 6; xviii, 24; xix, 8; xx, 8.

are represented as offering the prayers of the Saints to the Almighty.[81]

This appellation was gradually extended so as to be come frequently a mere title of respect. Hence the emperors were often called, *sanctissimi.* In later times this term became a general mark of respect in letters and documents.[82] Thus St. Augustine, writing to a deacon, addresses him with: "your holiness"; [83] and St. Fulgentius uses the same form of address to a pious woman: "I have received your holiness' letter." [84]

Finally custom decreed that the appellation *Saint,* used as a substantive, should be confined to persons of approved sanctity. This approval eventually became a prerogative of the Holy See, as will appear from the chapter on Canonization.

The Communion understood in the phrase, Communion of Saints, is a certain fellowship, a spiritual, intangible, but none the less real common-union that not only binds together the faithful on earth, one to the other, but moreover embraces those holy souls who have gone before into the great Hereafter, whether they be now in a state of enjoyment, or of temporary expiation.[85] This Communion of Saints — *ἁγίων*

[81] St. Jerome (l. I *ep.* 2, *ad Julianum Diac.*): "Sancti olim omnes Christiani vocabantur."— Alexander III addresses Pretejannus, the heretical king of Ethiopia, as, *Sanctissimus.*— Baronius *Annal.* an. 1177 (t. xix, p. 450).

[82] Cf. Canciani, *Barbarorum Leges Antiquae,* t. ii, passim.

[83] *Ep.* ii *ad Quodvult.* Diac., "sanctitatem tuam."

[84] "Epistolam sanctitatis tuae suscepi."— Fulgent. *ep.* 4, *ad Probam.*

[85] De Maistre presents this thought in his own beautiful way. "Vous voyez comment chaque dogme du christianisme se rattache aux lois fondamentales du monde spirituel: il est tout aussi important d'observer qu'il n'en est pas un qui ne tende a purifier l'homme et à l'exalter.

κοινωνία — is a community of spiritual interests, of prayers, and good works, and graces, and intercessions. It recognizes not the barrier of death, since it is a union of elements over which death has no power. Although non-Catholics frequently understand this as restricted to the faithful on earth,[86] the Catholic position is the only tenable one on the subject, inasmuch as the Catholic Church alone has ever translated into practice the traditional custom of prayers for the dead, invocation of the saints in glory, and an unshaken belief in the efficacy of their intercession.[87]

In one word, the expression, Communion of Saints, comprises the Church Militant, Triumphant, and Suffering.

"Quel superbe tableau que celui de cette immense cite des esprits avec ses trois ordres toujours en rapport! le monde qui *combat* présente une main au monde qui *souffre*, et saisit de l'autre celle du monde qui *triomphe*. L'action de grâce, la prière, les satisfactions, les secours, les inspirations, la foi, l'espérance et l'amour circulent de l'un à l'autre comme des fleuves bienfaisants. Rien n'est isolé, et les esprits, comme les lames d'un faisceau aimanté, jouissent de leurs propres forces et de celles de tous les autres."— *Les Soirées de St.-Petersbourg*, t. ii, Dix. Entretien., p. 284–5; ed. 1821.

[86] Gilbert, op. cit. ch. vii.— Vawdrey, however, admits that, "it means the inner religious union of the faithful as members of the mystical Body of Christ, with the other members of the Body, especially with the elect just made perfect who are sure of the membership of the heavenly kingdom of God, and are able to help with their intercessions those faithful still living on earth."— *Meaning of the Doct. of the Com. of Saints*, p. 77.

[87] The Angels, by reason of their subjection to Christ, "who is the head of all principality and power" (*Colos.* ii, 10), are included in the Church Triumphant, and thus belong to the Communion of Saints.— Cf. *Sum. Theol.* P. iii, q. viii, a. 4.

CHAPTER II

INVOCATION — THE CHURCH MILITANT

> And therfor, Lady bright, thou for us praye,
> Then shalt thou bothe stinte al his grevaunce,
> And make our foo to failen of his preye.
> — *Chaucer* to B. V. M.[1]

In the Deposit of Faith, which the Church has ever guarded with vigilant and jealous care, there are contained doctrines which owe their clear and unmistakable exposition to the violent opposition aroused by enemies of the truth. As the sturdy oak waxes stronger and strikes deeper root under the heart-breaking rigor of the elements, so does poor human nature under the touchstone of persecution transform itself into marvels of heroism. When the various tenets of belief in the early Church were viciously attacked by the heretics of the times it but served to place those beliefs in so clear and brilliant a light as to dazzle, by its effulgence, the champions of error and of rebellion. Thus it was that the doctrines pertaining to the most Holy Trinity, to the Nature of Christ, the prerogatives of the Mother of God, the Procession of the Holy Ghost, to the devotions towards the Saints, their relics and images, and many other beliefs dear to the true Christian, were surrounded by a halo

[1] Ed. Oxford, 1895, p. 79.

of such ravishing luster as to make their true nature evident and incontestable for all time.

Protestant writers, in their eagerness to overthrow the old Faith, and ruthlessly to tear down the landmarks that had guided the faithful for ages, could not have seized upon a doctrine more detrimental to their interests than is the one of which we treat. For if there is one phase of early Christian belief that stands out in bold and challenging relief, it is that pertaining to the Invocation of the Saints. The theological principles of this dogma are surrounded on every side by a perfect phalanx of testimony that begins to form at the very cradle of Christianity, and increases in strength and volume with such rapidity and vigor that in the fourth century it swept Vigilantius and his pirate crew into oblivion, only to see him again hauled forth and galvanized into mechanical action by the buccaneers of the sixteenth century. As if to rebuke the flippant spirit of the Lutheran period the Catacombs of Rome have opened wide their secret vaults and given up their proofs of the old dogma, while the documentary evidences of the Orient have hurried to offer their unimpeachable testimony in support of the claims of Rome.

The attitude of many non-Catholics on the subject of the Saints has been an inexplicable paradox. The principles which the Church has from time to time enunciated in limpid form have been set down as the vagaries of an idol-worshipping sect. When the principle of continuity of dogma has been subjected to critical analysis the inevitable result has ever been a re-confirmation of the old adage that in all ages and times "the law governing the practices of worship among the faithful has been a sure index of the nature

of their faith." [2] To protect this truth from nefarious attack innumerable arguments have been adduced to show its consistency with Scripture, and with the perennial teaching of the Church in her councils, her liturgy, through the Fathers, the martyrs, and the universal customs of the faithful. It will be sufficient to examine critically but briefly what these various sources of belief have to offer in support of the contention that it is lawful to pray to and to worship the Saints.

A cultus, or worship, is in itself nothing more than a recognition of superior excellence in another. The diversity of gifts, of talents, and of achievements is manifest by the fact that some men attain heights of greatness that place them on a pinnacle before the admiring gaze of humanity. Then they are surrounded by an aura of sacredness and are the recipients of a worship that has been well styled hero-worship. "From Norse Odin to Samuel Johnson, from the divine Founder of Christianity to the withered Pontiff of Encyclopædism, in all times and places the hero has been worshipped. It will ever be so. To me it is very cheering to consider that no skeptical logic, no general triviality, insincerity and aridity of any Time and its influences can destroy this noble inborn loyalty and worship that is in man." [3]

This homage which is rendered to a great man and which springs from the depths of human nature, ever prone to recognize superior merit, exacts its toll from all conditions of mankind. A Shakespeare is worshipped by his loyal admirers throughout the

[2] "Legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi."—*Ep. S. Celestini ad Episcopos Gall.*

[3] Carlyle, *Hero-worship, Lect.* I.

world, his statues are honored, wreaths of loving remembrance are carefully deposited at his shrines, and the greatest intellects of earth unite in proclaiming his title to all the eulogy and veneration that hallow his memory. Yet if Catholics insist on offering up pæans of praise to the heroes of their Faith they are decried as idolaters, heathens, and pilferers of the glory which belongs to God alone.[4] And nevertheless we have no more intention of transferring to our heroes the honor due to God than have the patriots at the tomb of Washington. If a Christian in early times placed a wreath on the brow of an image of the emperor he was guilty of idolatry. When a patriotic Frenchman thus honors his great Napoleon, he is commended for the act. The difference consists in the intention which accompanies each act, and the general acceptance of its significance.[5] We do not adore the saints, though we do honor them. St. Augustine in his marvelous work on the "City of God," thus refutes the charge of the pagans that Christians worshipped their martyrs as deities. "Our martyrs are not gods: for we know there is one and the same God over them and us. Nor are the wonders claimed to be wrought in the temples of the false gods at all

[4] On this difference between the Christian and the Jewish Church Lapini remarks: "In the Jewish religion this worship (*of the Saints*) was absent; but the very reasons of this absence are an argument for the Christian religion. For considering their proclivity towards idolatry, the worship of religious men could not well be permitted the Jews without great danger. During the Christian period this danger was eliminated. The reason is clear. A higher degree of civilization had been attained by Greek and Latin; and at this time even among the pagans idolatry had fallen into disrepute."— *Istituz. Liturg.* parte iv, c. 35.

[5] It was likewise accounted idolatry if a weak-hearted Christian, without believing in idols, but through fear of punishment, manifested by an external act, as burning incense before them, a profession of belief in idols.

comparable to the miracles performed through the relics of our martyrs. These wonders are wrought by the martyrs, or more correctly, by God, at their intercession and with their coöperation. . . . We do not build temples to the martyrs as to gods, but shrines to men who have passed away: we do not erect altars upon which to sacrifice to the martyrs, but to the one, only God whom the martyrs as well as we recognize. During this sacrifice, we mention the names of these men of God who by their profession overcame the world; but they are not invoked [as gods] by the priest who offers the sacrifice. For he sacrifices not to them, but to God, although it is in memory of them: he is a priest not of the martyrs, but of God." [6]

St. Clement Martyr intimates as much when he says that we should pray for those who have fallen into sin, and that humility and repentance will be given them through "this our merciful remembrance before God and the Saints." [7]

In order to grasp the genuine teaching of the Church in all ages, and to distinguish local abuses or errors from authentic doctrine, we have a golden rule laid down by St. Jerome.

This great Doctor early retired into the solitude of the desert. While there engaged in study and the pursuit of virtue, he relates the following: Three com-

[6] *De Civ. Dei*, l. xxii, c. 10.— Writing against Faustus (l. xxi, c. 21), he says: "Longe minoris peccati est, ebrium redire a martyribus, quam vel jejunum sacrificare martyribus. Sacrificare martyribus, dixi: non dixi sacrificare Deo in memoriis martyrum, quod frequentissime facimus, illo dumtaxat ritu quo sibi sacrificari Novi Testamenti manifestatione praecepit: quod pertinet ad illum cultum qui latria dicitur, et uni Deo debetur."— Cf. also *De Civ. Dei* viii, 17, which is cited in the Council of Trent, sess. xxii, c. 3, *De Missis in hon. SS.*

[7] *Ep. ad Corinth.* c. 56. *P. G.* t. i, col. 322.

petitors arose for the see of Antioch. St. Jerome was sought out by each of them, who endeavored to win over the recluse to his own party. The saint writes to Pope St. Damasus. "The Church here is rent in three parts, each seeking to draw me after it. I exclaim: Whoever is joined to the see of Peter is my choice! Meletius, Vitalis, and Paulinus, each in turn, declares for you. I might believe them if only one claimed this; but now, either two of them lie, or they are all three liars." [8]

This was the criterion of certitude in the fourth century, union with the see of Rome. This then shall guide us in selecting our evidence further on.

As was explained in the previous chapter, adoration and worship are terms that may be applied in a general sense. They can never from a religious viewpoint be applied to any but God, or to one to whom God has granted exceptional grace.[9] For grace it is which distinguishes a child of God from a follower of the enemy. God alone is good, is just, is omnipotent. "What have we that we have not received?" God is "our strength, our refuge, our protector, salvation and support." [10] We realize that we have been "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," [11] "who was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification;" [12] and "being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." [13] All this is true of Jesus Christ alone. We do not therefore intend to exalt

[8] *Ep. ad Damasum*, l. 1, ep. 26 — ed. Romae, 1731.
[9] This includes, of course, relics and objects connected with the saints.
[10] *Ps.* xvii, 1–3.
[11] *Rom.* iii, 24.
[12] Ibid. iv, 25.
[13] Ibid. v, 9.

the saints to the position of chief mediators, for "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the just: and he is the propitiation for our sins, and . . . for those of the whole world." [14] "He is the mediator of the new testament: . . . that . . . they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance." [15]

These are truths therefore which no Catholic may safely question. But does all this imply that there can be no intermediaries to this chief Advocate? Does it mean that each individual must of necessity apply personally to the Arch-Mediator? Is it therefore impossible to first approach those who may stand closer to the grand Advocate Himself? If this be the only meaning which it is possible to read into St. Paul's declaration and St. John's consolatory admonition, then surely are we perplexed by the great Apostle's words and actions elsewhere. For he must have so far forgotten his own teaching as to frequently recommend himself to the prayers of those who were certainly his inferiors. Nor would it do to say that his humility alone prompted this request. For if Christ alone be our only hope with the Father, humility would be a poor excuse for thus ruthlessly ignoring Christ's exclusive right. And yet St. Paul explicitly, and earnestly, and on many occasions begs the prayers of the faithful. "I beseech you, brethren . . . that you help me in your prayers for me to God." [16] "Brethren, pray for me." [17] "Pray for

[14] I *John* ii, 1, 2.
[15] *Heb.* ix, 15.
[16] *Rom.* xv, 30.— An echo of this spirit is heard in the famous Διδαχή, or *Doctrine of the Apostles:* "Thou shalt pray for others;" c. ii, n. 7. This document, generally, is believed to date from the first century, though some consider it as belonging to

us." [18] To make matters worse, this spirit seems to have possessed some of the other Apostles, for St. James tells the Christians, "Pray for one another"; [19] and St. John throughout the Apocalypse speaks of the prayers of the Saints,[20] that is, of the faithful on earth, which are being presented to the Most High by the Saints, or ancients, in heaven.

Now, where can we find an exit from this inextricable maze! How are we to reconcile passages that are clearly in diametrical opposition? If we consult the Old Testament for parallels the difficulty but grows apace, for we there find men like Samuel [21] and Job [22] praying for their brethren; and what is more, God Himself commanding certain persons to go to Job that they may be restored to the divine friendship at the intercession of the holy patriarch. On the other hand, if we consult the practices of the early Church we shall find it permeated with this spirit of mutual request for prayers. Shall we therefore admit contradiction in the word of God? And if so, by which opinion shall we be guided, and why one rather than the other?

There is but one logical solution to this really grave difficulty. We must endeavor to understand in what way Christ is our Mediator, and in what

the time of St. Justin.—It is beautiful to witness the way in which the Christians carry out the injunction to pray for others. With the clouds of terrific persecution hanging threateningly over them they beg the blessings of God upon their cruel rulers. "Grant them (*temporal rulers*), health, peace, union, and firmness, that unhampered they may exercise the authority which Thou hast entrusted to them." Cf. Clement of Rome, I, 59–61.

[17] I *Thess.* v, 25.
[18] *Heb.* xiii, 18, etc., etc.
[19] *Jas.* v, 16.
[20] See page 25, n. 80.
[21] I *Kings*, vii, 8–10.
[22] *Job* xlii, 8.

sense we have recourse to the power of impetration recognized in the saints and angels.

In the pages of Holy Writ Christ stands forth pre-eminently as the Savior, the promised One who was sent to restore all things in God. The nature of man's fall and the divine Will in exacting reparation necessitated an infinite redemption. Christ therefore came to act chiefly as intermediary between a guilty creature and his offended Creator. Every word of the New Testament relating to Christ accentuates this office of mediator, and precisely in this sense of chief Mediator, or essential cause of man's salvation. Even in those very passages which Protestants often allege to show that Christ is our only mediator, we find ever the idea of salvation, of redemption, of propitiation for sin given as the basis of this office.[23]

St. Peter standing boldly before the assembly of the princes, the ancients, the scribes, and the High Priest with his kindred, tells them that Christ is the "stone rejected by the builders and now become the head of the corner."[24] He immediately adds, "Neither is there salvation in any other."[25] Here there is question of essential mediatorship, namely, salvation, and not merely accidental impetration.

Christ Himself often refers to His office of chief Mediator between God and man, emphasizing the necessity of access to God through Him for eternal salvation. "I am the door of the sheep."[26] "I am the

[23] This idea is expressed by saying that the mediatorship of redemption is the office of Christ alone, while that of prayer and intercession belongs to the Saints, and is based chiefly on the merits of the Incarnation.

[24] *Ps.* cxvii, 22.

[25] *Acts* iv, 12.

[26] *John* vi, 7.

way, the truth, and the life." [27] "No man can come to me, unless the Father draw him." [28] In all these places salvation through Christ alone is the idea conveyed. St. John confirms this view when he says that, "God sent his Son into the world that the world may be saved." [29]

It is St. Paul who, writing to the early converts from the errors of paganism, impresses continually upon them that Christ, and He alone, must now take the place in their hearts formerly occupied by their pagan gods. He strives to make them realize why Christ came into the world. Salvation is the keynote of all his letters. That ardent, all-consuming fire of charity that inflamed the Apostle with zeal for his brethren issues from his heart laden with the most tender exhortation and confidence in Jesus. "You were at that time without God in this world," he tells the Ephesians, "but now in Christ Jesus, you, who some time were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." [30] . . . "by him we have access to the Father." [31] "Through him to reconcile all things unto himself, making peace through the blood of his cross." [32] "One mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: who gave himself a redemption for all." [33] "He is able also to save: always living to make intercession for us." [34] In these chapters (7–9) there is continual reference to Christ as our High Priest, and the Savior of the world. [35]

[27] *John* xiv, 6.
[28] *John* vi, 44.
[29] *John* iii, 17.
[30] *Eph.* ii, 12, 13.
[31] Ver. 18.
[32] *Col.* i, 20.
[33] I *Tim.* ii, 5.
[34] *Heb.* vii, 25.
[35] *Heb.* viii, 6; ix, 15; xii, 24. Cf. also *Rom.* iii, 25; v, 2; *Gal.* iii, 20; *Matt.* xviii, 11, etc.

Again, St. John recalls the nature of the mediatorship professed by his Master. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just. He is the propitiation for our sins . . . and for those of the whole world." [36] "He . . . sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." [37]

Under the light of these various texts chosen entirely at random, and typical of a large class, it seems difficult to confuse, even deliberately, the office filled by Christ, and that which we recognize in the Saints. Christ is the "head of the body," we, His members. The more closely we are joined to the head by grace the greater will be the influx of vital energy and power. Whatever power the Saints may possess in our regard is by virtue of the prerogatives granted by the supreme Mediator. We do not consider the Saints as endowed with divine efficacy. Neither are they looked upon as God, as St. Augustine pointed out.[38] "Who ever considered a mere man, God!" exclaims St. Jerome with indignation against the heretics of his time. "Who ever adored the martyrs!" [39] The pious Abbot Arnold, descanting upon the virtues of St. John, the beloved disciple, and the commission he received from the dying Savior to care for His holy Mother, exclaims: "Behold the way to reach our heavenly Father! Let the penitent's loving affection rise from thee to Mary, from the Mother to the Son, and from the Son to the Father." [40] This may be

[36] I *John* ii, 1.
[37] I *John* iv, 10.
[38] Cf. p. 31.
[39] "Quis aliquando martyres adoravit? quis hominem putavit Deum?"—*Adv. Vigilant.* n. 5.—*P. L.* xxiii, 357 (Migne).
[40] Arnoldus Bonaval. Ab. *Tract. de Sept. Verb. Dom.*

somewhat rhetorical, but it beautifully expresses the Catholic doctrine on the efficacy of invoking the Saints, namely, as secondary mediators, as those who by greater proximity to the throne of grace enjoy more effective powers of impetration.

From the very moment we grasp the Catholic point of view, that is, that everything concerning our relations towards the Saints must be considered as subordinate to Christ, and represented by the worship which is called dulia, it becomes illogical, not to say absurd, to accuse Catholics of yielding divine tribute to the blessed in heaven, or of detracting from the prerogatives of the Redeemer.[41]

Now, the Beatific Vision places the angels and the Saints on an equal footing, so to say, before the majesty of God. Those blessed spirits stand ever before the dazzling glory of the eternal God, and tremble blissfully in never-ceasing pæans of worship and adoration. They are also messengers[42] of the divine will to men. They are sent to guard the children of God. Even when engaged in this duty of love, our Lord tells us they "always see the face of my Father who is in heaven."[43] Thus being impassible, unaffected by material conditions of distance and space,

[41] "There is something intermediate between Divine perfection and human excellence: for instance, grace and the glory of the saints. These are supernatural and most transcendent gifts; and the Church, to express her gratitude to God for such unmerited benefits, pays an honor and a reverence infinitely inferior to Divine worship, but more elevated than human respect, to all those departed servants of Heaven, who have been distinguished by such favors and hallowed with such extraordinary sanctity." — Dr. Rock, *Hierurgia,* t. i, p. 304. Ed. 1892.

[42] מלאך, messenger; thus they are styled throughout the Old Testament.

[43] *Matt.* xviii, 10.

they ever bask in the brightness of eternal glory. Man also in heaven will "be like unto the angels of God,"[44] in many respects. For being a child of God he will be "equal to the angels."[45] Moreover, inasmuch as he is made "partaker of the divine nature,"[46] he can exclaim with St. Paul: "We see now through a glass . . . but then face to face . . . then shall I know even as I am known."[47] The reason is that, "we shall be like to Him; because we shall see Him as He is."[48]

Again. We find this equality admitted even in this life. When St. John had viewed the marvels of paradise, and was beside himself with the ecstatic vision of things never before seen of man, he turned to the angel who had been his heavenly guide, and falling on his knees would have adored that blessed spirit. But the angel prevented him, saying, "See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant . . . adore God."[49] A few holy Fathers were of opinion that St. John mistook the angel for God, by reason of his glorious appearance. Rather it seems more proper to hold with others that St. John would have simply worshipped the angel as a superior being, but always a creature. Else we must suppose that the great Apostle was ignorant of the most elementary tenets of his faith. For after this solemn admonition he shortly is about to do the same thing again, but once more is prevented by the angel, who declares, "I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren, the prophets."[50] The celestial spirit therefore places himself on the same level with the great Apostle and prophet. This assuredly indi-

[44] *Matt.* xxii, 30.
[45] *Luke* xx, 36.
[46] II *Peter* i, 4.
[47] I *Cor.* xiii, 12.
[48] I *John* iii, 2.
[49] *Apoc.* xix, 10.
[50] *Apoc.* xxii, 9.

cates that the Saints are, by proximity to God, "equal to the angels."[51]

That Almighty God wills us to honor and worship the angels with that reverence due to those who enjoy His favor so intimately is beyond question. It is under this guise that they appear ordinarily to men, and in this way that God expresses His benign intentions in their regard. True to their name they have ever been the messengers between God and man,[52] and as such were to be treated with reverence; "he will not forgive when thou hast sinned . . . but if thou wilt hear his voice . . . I will be an enemy to thy enemies."[53] In conformity to this view, after Jacob had struggled all night with the angel, he asked the holy spirit to bless him, "and he blessed him in the same place."[54] Jacob afterwards invoked the blessing of this angel on the two sons of Joseph.[55]

The Old Testament is dotted throughout with instances of the veneration exhibited to the angels. The Psalmist in an outburst of spiritual triumph calls upon them, "Bless the Lord, all ye his angels: you that are mighty in strength, and execute his word."[56] "Praise ye him, all his angels, praise ye him, all his hosts."[57] He encourages the meek; "the angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear him and shall deliver them";[58] "for he hath given his

[51] *Luke* xx, 36.
[52] Cf. chap. on the Angels.
[53] *Exod.* xxiii.
[54] *Gen.* xxxii, 29.
[55] *Gen.* xlviii, 16. "The angel that delivereth me from all evils, bless these boys: and let my name be called upon them, and the names of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and may they grow into a multitude upon the earth."
[56] *Ps.* cii, 20.
[57] *Ps.* cxlviii, 2.
[58] xxxiii, 8.

angels charge over thee."[59] The patriarchs invariably manifest profound feelings of reverence towards the angels.[60] In a word, the great characters of biblical history are brought in close touch with these ministering spirits, and rely upon them in times of peril and doubt. They venerate their celestial helpers, they do homage to them, and call upon them for blessings; that is to say, they invoke the powerful influence of these spirits with God.

St. Paul makes this even more clear. Writing a letter full of profound knowledge of Scripture to the converts of Palestine, mostly Jews, he endeavors to prove to them from their own holy books that Christ and His teaching formed the complement, the fulfillment of the Old Law. He compares Christ and His prerogatives to those of the angels, whence he argues the infinite superiority of the Savior. He adds: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?"[61] Now, if the angels hold the position of guides and helpers to us on the road to salvation, it stands to reason that we can from time to time appeal to these guides, or ministering spirits, for light, counsel, and assistance. Else why their ministry? Or are they blind, stolid ministers, with no interest in their charge? The free-will with which we all are endowed enables us to choose good or ill. Shall we then neglect to ask our heavenly guide and assistant to strengthen our frailty, to use His ministering care in guiding us aright? If "he hath given his angels charge over thee: to keep thee in all thy ways," and

[59] xc, 11.
[60] V. g. *Gen.* xviii; xix; *Josue* v, 15; *Tob.* xii, 16, etc.
[61] *Heb.* i, 14.

if, "in their hands they shall bear thee up: lest thou dash thy foot against a stone," [62] it surely cannot be contrary to the will of God to invoke those angels for strength and continued protection.

Now, that saints and holy men are on an even footing with the angels in this regard, Scripture again attests in many places.

One of the most lucid and convincing examples extant is that afforded us in the book of Job. In this magnificent work, written almost entirely in verse in the original Hebrew,[63] and replete with poetic imagery of a high order, the Lord Himself pronounces judgment on the false friends of the holy patriarch. Not only is Job justified for his patience and virtuous humility, but the Lord said to Eliphaz: "My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends. . . . Take unto you therefore seven oxen, and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer for yourselves a holocaust: and my servant Job shall pray for you: his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you." [64] The three went and did as they were commanded, and "the Lord accepted the face of Job. The Lord also was turned at the penance of Job, when he prayed for his friends." [65] What more vivid illustration than this that the "prayer of the just man availeth much"? [66]

The Apostles were deeply imbued with this idea of mutual succor and help through prayer. Though recognizing the frailty and weakness of human nature, they still have confidence in the efficacy of the prayer of those who had been called to a life of

[62] *Ps.* xc, 11, 12.
[63] Chap. iii–xlii.
[64] *Job* xlii, 7, 8.
[65] Verse 10.
[66] *Jas.* v, 16.

Christian sanctity. Hence, they not only exhort their converts to pray for one another,[67] but they remind those devoted neophytes that they themselves are ever mindful in prayer of the needs of their brethren. Fully realizing the dignity of the Christian vocation, having received "the adoption of sons, and heirs also through God,"[68] they give thanks, "praying always for you . . . we cease not to pray for you."[69] With becoming humility and faith then the Apostle begs them, "Pray for us, that the word of God . . . may be glorified."[70]

St. Peter realizes the dignity to which the Christian has been raised, having been made "partaker of the divine nature."[71] The proximity to Almighty God, therefore, is the basis of his faith in mutual prayer. "Now therefore you are no more strangers and foreigners," says the Apostle of the gentiles, "but you are fellow-citizens with the saints and the domestics of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone: in whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord. In whom you also are built together into a habitation of God in the spirit."[72]

This Scriptural symposium can be understood in but one sense, to wit, that since "we are made partakers of Christ,"[73] our share in His merits, and con-

[67] *James* 1. c.—"Orat apostolus pro plebe: orat plebs pro apostolo. Oramus pro vobis, fratres: et vos orate pro nobis."—St. Aug. *tract. I* in Ep. I Joan.

[68] *Gal.* iv, 5.

[69] *Col.* i, 3–9.

[70] II *Thess.* iii, 1.

[71] II *Peter*, i, 4.

[72] *Eph.* ii, 19–22.

[73] *Heb.* iii, 14.—This participation extends to other privileges. "I am the light of the world," declares Christ (*John* viii, 12),

sequently our power to help others, is dependent on the nearness with which we approach the source of all power and grace.[74]

This is the principle upon which sanctity, according to Catholic theology, is built. St. Thomas teaches that the various choirs of angels are so distributed by reason of their close union to Almighty God. The nearer a blessed spirit approaches to God the higher necessarily will be his rank among the celestial hierarchy.[75] So in a measure with the saints. The blessed Mother of God is Queen of Saints not only by reason of her dignity, but also in virtue of the stupendous heights to which she attained in the order of grace. For according to the teaching of theologians the grace with which the Blessed Virgin was adorned, without being infinite, exceeded that of all the angels and saints together, placing her over them as their Queen by every right of sovereignty.[76] In this sense she is called, "Mother of grace."[77]

The doctrine of the Invocation of Saints is summed up with wonted clearness by the Council of Trent.[78] As is well known, this Council, one of the General Councils of the Church, was convoked for the purpose

and "you are the light of the world," He tells the Apostles (*Matt.* v, 14. Cf. also *John* i, 9). He is the Son of God, and He gave others "the power to be made the sons of God" (*John* i, 12), by adoption. This is true of many other qualities communicated by Christ.

[74] This is explained in *Prov.* xv, 29: "The Lord is far from the wicked: and he will hear the prayers of the just."

[75] *Sum. Theol.*, p. 1, q. cvi, a. 3.

[76] Cf. De Vega, *Theologia Mariana*, t. ii, n. 1150 (ed. Naples, 1866).

[77] "Maria, Mater gratiae." Office of the Blessed Virgin.

[78] On account of its importance we give in full (Appendix I) the decree of the Council of Trent in regard to the Invocation of Saints, and the Veneration of Relics and Images. This is the authoritative statement of the Church's position in the matter.

of meeting the agitators of the sixteenth century on their own ground, and condemning their impious innovations as opposed to the spirit of the true Church as exemplified from the Apostolic age.[79]

A synopsis was made of the errors of the day, and in the last session there is a decree explaining the true nature of the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. That part touching the subject of this chapter is as follows:

"The sacred Synod commands in the first place that all Bishops, and others engaged in teaching or in spiritual charge, shall carefully instruct the faithful in regard to the . . . invocation . . . of the Saints; that they so instruct them according to the practice received by the Catholic and Apostolic Church from the very first ages of the Christian religion, and according to the consensus of the Fathers, and the decrees of the sacred Councils. . . . Let them teach that . . . it is good and useful humbly to invoke the Saints, and to have recourse to their prayers and assistance to obtain benefits from God through His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who alone is our Redeemer and Savior. They who deny that the saints in glory are to be invoked, or who assert that this invocation is idolatry, is opposed to the word of God, is foolish, or derogates from the honor belonging to the one Mediator of God and man, Jesus Christ — such persons assert what is impious." [80]

After a careful inspection of this pronouncement it

[79] The Council of Trent was called together by order of Pope Paul III, in the Bull, *Initio*, dated May 21, 1542. The first session was held under the same Pope, Dec. 13, 1545. The twenty-fifth, and last, session was held Dec. 3 and 4, 1563, under Pope Pius IV.

[80] *Sess.* XXV.

is evident that according to the Council this dogma rests on Scripture and tradition, the latter being, when rightly understood, the lawful interpreter of the sense and true significance of Holy Writ.

The very nature of the *cultus sanctorum,* in view of the general prevalence of idolatry in the world at the time of the Apostles and the first Christians, made it imperative to proceed with the utmost caution, lest the recently received converts should confuse the new worship with their former pagan practices. The sublimity of Christ's teaching, especially as regards His presence in the Blessed Eucharist, and the efficacy communicated to the Sacraments, was so far above the comprehension of the gross pagan mind, steeped as it was in every sort of abomination, that these tenets of Christian belief were surrounded by a halo of mystery and secrecy impervious to the eyes of the uninitiate. For fear lest these pearls might be cast in vain before the grovelling swine of heathendom this practice of secrecy was universally adopted, and afterwards became known as the *Lex arcani,*[81] or Law of the Secret. For a similar reason the faithful were slow to adopt practices that might lead the converts from paganism to conclude that they had but changed from the worship of idols to the adoration of statues, images, relics, and martyrs.[82]

[81] For the history and explanation of the *Lex Arcani,* cf. Palma, *Hist. Eccl.,* t. i, cap. xv–xviii. Ed. vii, Romae, 1891.

[82] The veneration towards relics and martyrs, as well as the respect for sacred images, did not fall under the Law of the Discipline, since the Christians openly practiced these usages. But, as was said before, the chief solicitude was centered in safeguarding the principal tenets of belief as established by Christ. As Le Nourry remarks (*Apparatus ad Biblioth Max.* c. ii—apud Migne, *P. G.* t. i, p. 10): "It is beyond the question of doubt that the early Christian writers endeavored above all things to make known the Gospel of Christ. . . . Hence, they

This is a fundamental principle of all sound historical and doctrinal criticism, that in order to grasp the true import of any law or custom it is requisite that the circumstances of time and mental attitude be taken carefully into account. Only by following this canon is it possible to obtain a correct insight of the workings of laws and customs in any given epoch.

In spite of this danger of misunderstanding among the early Christians we find indubitable evidence that they honored and invoked the saints and holy persons both in life and after death. Not all the teaching of the Apostles was committed to writing, for we nowhere find our Lord commanding them to draw up constitutions, or draft a written code of laws, or leave to posterity elaborate and ornate treatises on every point of doctrine. The New Testament embodies, indeed, the essential teachings of Christ, but these teachings are presented in letters or Gospels composed at the time chiefly for individuals or for local churches.

Around these written teachings there grew up a body of doctrine illustrative and explanatory of the former — a doctrine which was not new, nor dependent upon individual interpretation or personal caprice, but issuing from the same living fonts that produced and called into being the Written Word which is accepted by all.[83] Side by side with this

strove to convince the Jews that Christ was the Messia so ardently longed for. . . . They then tried to prove to pagans and idolators the unity of God."

[83] Referring to this gradual development of doctrine reduced to practice, we find, as Kirsch remarks, that "the intercessions of the faithful for one another, and for all mankind . . . have been practiced by Christians from the apostolic period." Their deep conviction that the prayer of the just man is powerful before God "forms the starting point for the fuller development of the doctrine of the Communion of Saints and for the practices to which it gave rise in the religious life of believers."—Kirsch, *Com. of Saints in the Ancient Church*, p. 17; McKee's tr. 1910.

authoritative and lawful tradition there grew apace, as pernicious, prolific weeds, a misleading and fallacious set of so-called doctrines, wholly the work of man, and constituting the first heresies and travesties of Christianity.

Even in the very age in which the Apostles were laying the foundations of the Christian Church enemies were at work sowing cockle, and endeavoring to thwart the efforts of Apostle and teacher, or to bring down discredit upon the infant institution by confusing ideas and doctrines, and thus exposing to contradiction and consequent ridicule the pure tenets of a faith that reproved the loose lives of its opponents.

St. Paul himself noticed this malicious tendency, and took occasion to warn the Thessalonians against the reports he had received anent the evil, misleading tactics of certain impostors in their midst. The great Apostle admonishes the faithful not to be misled by any pseudo-doctors or guides who might seek to impose upon them by pretending to be inspired by "the Spirit," or to have received authority or information "by word . . . or by epistle, as sent from us."[84] In order then to strengthen the faithful, and to dissipate the mists of error and deception, he declares solemnly: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast: and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word, or by our epistle."[85] It would be well nigh impossible to state his position in more unequivocal language. He gives equal value to his teaching whether as presented orally or in the form of written document.[86] As a

[84] II *Thess.* ii, 2.

[85] Verse 14.

[86] Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, and companion of St. Polycarp, tells us that he always questioned closely those who had been followers and disciples of the apostles, "for I did not think

matter of accuracy it may be said that the epistles and gospels contain but a portion, or rather, a symposium of the oral teachings. In other words, the Apostles preached more than they wrote. In this way there was vast material at hand to form a basis of legitimate tradition.

The Council of Trent enjoins on the Bishops to teach this doctrine of the Invocation of the Saints "according to the practice of the Church received from Apostolic times." This is tantamount to declaring that Tradition contains the germs of the doctrine as we profess it to-day, that in Tradition we should find practices, customs, and teachings that elucidate and exemplify the unshaken belief of the Church adown the ages.

In order to follow out this method we might, as the Fathers of Trent intimate, search through the councils, liturgies, and the writings of the early Doctors of the Church, and compile a vast collection of quotations and references. This it is not our intention to do in the present work. We intend rather to examine critically these sources, and to find out, if possible, whether they really contain evidence that it was customary to invoke the Saints.

The spirit of the first centuries of Christianity was a turning towards Christ as God. The world, long steeped in the abominations of idolatry with its concomitant train of immorality, obscenity and licentiousness, was to be gradually won back to its Creator. The one important point was to lead it back to God. Hence, development of certain doctrines not pertain-

that I could derive so great profit from books alone as from the utterances and discourses of the living voice."— Euseb. *H. E.* l. iii, c. 33.— Ed. Cologne, 1570.

ing directly or essentially necessary to salvation was deferred for the time being. The belief in the Invocation of Saints was indeed "good and useful," [87] as the Council of Trent declares, but not absolutely requisite as a means to gain heaven.

Thus we behold this doctrine begin gradually to unfold and blossom into perfect bloom. Pagans and Jews were wont to look upon Christians as actuated by the same instincts as themselves, as we see illustrated in the martyrdom of St. Polycarp in the second century. On this occasion the Jews demanded of the magistrates that the bones of the Saint be not given to the Christians, "lest they abandon the Crucified One and begin to worship this Man." [88]

Again. The pagans worshipped as deities worthy of divine honors many men and women who had been remarkable for great deeds in life, as Tertullian upbraids them in his *Apologeticus*.[89]

By degrees, however, the Christians became more free to develop their love and devotion towards the saints and to pray to them. The first to claim their supplications were the martyrs.[90] This was the result of a natural and logical development. For since it had become universally customary for the Christians to pray for one another and to recommend oneself to the prayers of others — a custom we see sanctioned by the practice of St. Paul and others — it was but a legitimate step forward to extend that recommendation to those who had given their lives for the faith, and who had entered into the enjoyment of their eternal reward.

[87] *Sess.* xxv.
[88] *Epist. Circularis Eccl. Smyrn.* n. 17.
[89] C. 10.— Cf. Arnobius, l. i and v.
[90] See chap. on Martyrs.

Thus St. Ignatius[91] in his letters continually begs the faithful to cease not to pray for him that he may be worthy to receive the crown of martyrdom, "which I hope through your prayers to obtain," he writes to the Ephesians, "that at Rome I may fight against the wild beasts, and by my martyrdom merit to become a disciple of Him who offered Himself to God a victim and an oblation for us."[92]

Fearing lest the Christians at Rome may exert themselves to save him from death, he writes touchingly to them, with deep feeling entreating them to place no obstacle to the sacrifice which he so joyfully anticipates. "I fear lest your charity may prove harmful to me. . . . Pray that I be given strength within and without; that my desires accord with my words; and that I be not only in name but in very deed a Christian. . . . Prevent me not from becoming prey to the wild beasts. . . . I am the grain in the field of the Lord, and shall be ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may become the pure bread of Christ."[93]

The same ardent spirit runs through his other epistles — hope of martyrdom for Christ, and courage and strength through the prayers of the faithful.[94]

So long as the persecution continued to harass the growth of the infant Church, the Christian writers were cautious not to speak too freely of doctrines that, while not essential to salvation might, if exposed to the ridicule of pagans, rather tend to belittle and to

[91] Martyred about the year 110. He is a witness to the apostolic usage of praying for and asking prayers of one another.
[92] *Ad Eph.* c. i.— *P. G.* v, 646.
[93] *Ad Rom.* c. i and iv.
[94] Cf. *ad Trallenses,* c. xii; *ad Magn.* c. xiv; *ad Philadelph.* c. v, etc.

injure the great doctrines of the unity of God and the divinity of Christ. Still there is abundant evidence which goes to show their belief in the same doctrines which they are loath to exhibit openly without cause.

In the first place we have innumerable and incontestable proofs in early Christian paleography that it was customary to invoke the departed. The Christian inscriptions of the first ages bear ample testimony to the widespread faith in the efficacy of this practice. It was usual in inscriptions on monuments to add a pious invocation to the departed, and especially to the martyrs.

The now famous inscription of Abercius will at once recur to the mind. As regards the belief in question we read:

PEACE TO THE PASSERBY, AND TO THOSE WHO REMEMBER ME.[95]

Nowhere else perhaps did this faith shine more clearly than in the abodes of the dead. As a last tender homage to the departed, more particularly if a martyr, the survivors signalized their belief in the resurrection and in the power of the deceased to facilitate the fruition of that yearned-for event.

One of the most familiar lines that greets the eye when gazing on the *loculi* or sarcophagi in the Catacombs is the prayer:

95 ΕΙΡΗΝΗ ΠΑΡΑΓΟΥΣΙΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΝΗΣΚΟΜΕΝΟΙΣ ΠΕΡΙ ΗΜΩΝ.

This inscription dates from the year 216, or earlier. It was discovered in fragments, in 1882–3, by Mr. Ramsey. The pieces are now in the Vatican Museum. A good critique of these lines is to be found in the *Dict. d'Archéol. Chré.*, t. i, s. v.— Ed. Paris, 1907.

Habe in mente, roges pro me, pete pro me, remember me, pray for me. A very early inscription, now in the Lateran Museum, gives the reason:

SENTIANVS FIDELIS IN PACE QUI VIXIT ANNIS XXI MENSS VIII DIES XVI ET IN ORATIONIS (*sic*) TVIS ROGES PRO NOBIS QVIA SCIMVS TE IN ☧.[96]

The faithful Sentianus in peace. He lived twenty-one years, eight months, and sixteen days. In thy prayers pray for us, for we know that thou art with Christ.

Among the many epitaphs both in Greek and Latin in the cemetery of St. Priscilla, we find:

ΕΡΩΤΑ
ΥΠΕΡ ΤΩΝ ΤΕΚΝΩΝ
ΜΕΤΑ ΑΝΔΡΟΣ[97]

Pray for thy children and thy husband.

And the well-known:

ANATOLIVS FILIO BENEMERENTI FECIT
QVI VIXIT ANNIS VII MENSIS VII DIE
BVS XX ISPIRITVS TVVS BENE REQVIES
CAT IN DEO PETAS PRO SORORE TVA.[98]

Anatolius to his beloved son who lived seven years, seven months, and twenty days. May thy spirit rest in God. Pray for thy sister.

A similar prayer is seen in the epitaph discovered in the cemetery called, Jordani. The wish is expressed:

[96] Marucchi, *Eléments d'Archéol. Ch.* t. i, p. 188.— Frequently these inscriptions were copied by the grave-diggers, illiterate men, which accounts for the grammatical mistakes.
[97] Marucchi, *Guide des Cat. Rom.,* p. 465.
[98] Op. c. p. 467.

BERVS (*sic*) ☧ ISPIRUM
IN PACE ET PET PRO NOBIS.[99]

May the true Christ (*receive*) thy spirit in peace, and pray thou for us.

These few specimens give us an insight into the simple belief of the primitive faithful in regard to invocation of the departed. Such examples may be multiplied to great length.[100]

It may be observed that non-Catholic writers often deny the force of the argument drawn from these inscriptions, but without reason. For though the dominant idea in these epitaphs is one of belief and hope in the resurrection, the faithful fortify this by an expression of belief in other truths of religion, as baptism, the Holy Eucharist, and the Communion of Saints.[101] For if customs are an index to the char-

[99] P. 378.

— In the cemetery of St. Lawrence, in Rome, the following was found.

. . . EMERENTI . IN . PACE . QVE . VIXIT . ANNIS . XXX . MESIS . SE . . .
. . . KAL . SEPTEMBRIS . SANCTE . LAVRENTI . SVSCEPTA . HABETO .
ANIMAM

— Marucchi, *Guide*, p. 287.

[100] Armellini, *Antichi Cimiteri*, p. 640, has a beautiful inscription on this. Countless examples are found in the works of all the archæologists from Bosio down to the present-day writers, and are still seen in the Catacombs.

[101] In subsequent ages, i. e., from the fourth century down to modern times, immense throngs of pilgrims yearly visited the cemeteries of Rome. They were wont to trace on the walls and masonry pious invocations and prayers to the saints who reposed in their last resting places. All of these numerous traces, called "graffiti," bear witness to the faith in the spiritual communion with the saints and martyrs. SANCTE SVSTE IN MENTE ABEAS IN ORATIONE — SANCTA IN MENTE HAVETE ET OMNES FRATRES NOS — BIBAS (*vivas*) IN DEO PETE. — SANTE XYSTE IN MENTE HABEAS IN HORATIONES. — IANVARIA BENE REFRIGERA ET ROGA PRO NOS. This is the tone of all the various graffiti to be found everywhere throughout the Catacombs. — Cf. Marucchi, op. c. p. 141, and 283, et seq.

acter of a people it is true to say that the pious ejaculations to be found everywhere in the subterranean crypts, are a guide to the belief then prevalent among the people. Subsequent ages expressed the idea in more formal terms, as when Pope Pascal I (about 817) wrote of the martyrs whose relics he had conveyed from the Catacombs into the city of Rome:

QVAE PRIOR IN CRYPTIS PAVSABANT MEMBRA BEATA
ROMA RESVLTAT OVANS SEMPER ORNATA PER AEVVM
HOS COLIT EGREGIOS DEVOTE ROMA PATRONOS.

Rome exultant and enriched forever, receives these relics which formerly lay in the crypts. Rome piously worships these distinguished patrons.

In the fourth century Pope Damasus (died 384) gave fresh impetus to the remembrance of the dead, and especially the martyrs.[102] In his beautiful tribute to the youthful virgin, St. Agnes, he ends with the plea:

O VENERANDA MIHI SANCTVM DECVS ALMA PVDORIS
VT DAMASI PRECIBVS FAVEAS PRECOR INCLYTA MARTYR.

O holy virgin, renowned martyr, precious gem of chastity, hear thou my prayer.

About the same time Prudentius, by far the most elegant of the early Christian poets, was singing in his "Hymns" the praises of the saints.

"Be thou present, and receive the humble prayers of thy suppliants, O powerful intercessor for our guilty souls at the throne of the Father. Have pity on our prayers

[102] See chap. on Martyrs.

that Christ being appeased may lend a merciful ear to us, and remit our offences." [103]

St. Paulinus of Nola (born 353), in his praise of St. Felix, says:

> That God of fearful majesty whose sway
> Is mercy-guided, Felix, for us pray,
> That unto prayers and merits such as thine
> For all our faults He would a pardon sign.[104]

Again, it should be noted that since modern criticism seeks facts and examples more than principles, at least in regard to early Christianity, whatever instances we cite bear upon themselves the stamp of antiquity. Now, if we could allege but one or two texts in favor of our belief there might be room for discussion. But when we see this doctrine held universally without a discordant note in the Church; when we behold the pious invocations, voiced by the simple faithful, not only tolerated by the Church but given prominence in her Liturgy, and in the teachings of her greatest doctors, we must of necessity conclude that such a practice far from being exotic or in the nature of an abuse, was a part of her very creed. A few words from the Fathers will suffice to prove their teaching on the subject, as their attitude is well-known and admitted by all — their panegyrics on the saints being alone abundant evidence in this regard.

In speaking of the martyr Gordius, St. Basil says: "It were folly to think that the saints who have despised all earthly things should still stand in need of our approval. Wherefore we celebrate their memory

[103] Περὶ Στεφάνων — *hym.* 5.
[104] *De S. Felice,* carm. iii. (Rock tr., *Hierurgia,* t. i, p. 322).

solely for our own good. For they need not our encomiums, but we need to be reminded of their lives, and we require the grace to imitate them." [105]

In his book on the Glory of Martyrdom, St. Cyprian thus addresses the future martyrs: "Although, dearest brethren, this depends on the divine mercy . . . yet will it be an act of kindness, of charity, and of love, if you are mindful of us when the Lord deigns to honor you with the crown of martyrdom." [106]

"O Celsus," exclaims St. Paulinus of Nola, "do thou with fraternal affection assist a brother, that we may share your present peace. . . . With pure and unsullied merits and prayers efface the sinful stains of the guilty." [107]

Eusebius of Cæsarea thus explains the nature of this invocation. "Honoring the friends of God as truly pious heroes, we draw near to their shrines; we offer up prayers to them, as to holy men whose intercession with God we hold to be of great advantage to us." [108]

The same idea is unfolded by St. Cyril of Jerusalem in his celebrated Catechetical Discourses. Speaking to the newly baptized and exhorting them to pray for the Church, the emperor, and others in need, he adds: "We then make remembrance also of those who have fallen asleep; of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs: that through their prayers and pleading God may receive our supplications." [109]

[105] *In Gord. M.*— Op. S. Bas. I, 445 (ed. Paris, 1638).
[106] *De Laud. Mart.*, n. 30.— *P. L.* iv, 834.
[107] Celse, juva fratrem socia pietate laborans,
Ut vestra nobis sit locus in requie,
Vivite participes, aeternum vivite, fratres,
Et laetos dignum par habitate locos,
Innocuisque pares meritis, peccata parentum,
Infantes, castis vincite suffragiis.
—*De Obitu Celsi*, lin. 611–616. *P. L.* xxiii, 689.
[108] *De Praep. Evang.* l. xiii, c. 7.
[109] Cat. xxiii, *De Sacra Lit.*, n. 9.

"Farewell, O Paula," St. Jerome writes in the life of his friend, St. Paula, "and may thy prayers be to me a staff in my old age." [110]

"Make friends of the holy Angels," says St. Leo the Great; "draw near to the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, and the martyrs. Look aloft to their riches, and by a holy rivalry, strive to obtain their prayerful assistance." [111]

"To those who would stand firm," repeats St. Hilary, "shall not be wanting either the protection of the saints, or the defence of the Angels." [112]

"Thou who art now standing before the divine altar," pleads St. Gregory of Nyssa, in his life of St. Ephrem, "be mindful of us, and obtain for us remission of our sins, that we may enjoy the eternal happiness of the heavenly kingdom." [113] "Do thou look down from heaven upon us with eyes of pity," prays St. Gregory of Nazianzen to St. Cyprian, "and guide our conduct and our lives, and assist the pastor of this flock." [114] Many volumes might be compiled with such references, but the above few random passages must suffice at present.

One of the most reliable sources whence to obtain an intimate knowledge of the belief and doctrine of the Church is her Liturgy. In her liturgical expressions the Church speaks authoritatively and in the full light of a consciousness of faith, confidence, and unwavering profession. The various liturgical collections have come down to us bearing upon their brows the seal of approbation from Sovereign Pontiffs,

[110] *Epist. ad Eustoch.* near end.
[111] Serm. V, *De Epiph.*
[112] *In Ps.* cxxiv — *P. L.* ix, 682.
[113] *P. G.* xlvi, 850.
[114] *In Laud. S. Cypriani. P. G.* xxxv, 1194.

Bishops, and Councils, as well as of the intelligent piety and devotion of the faithful.

When the dying Savior, hanging on the Cross between earth and heaven, commended the race, in the person of its representative, St. John, to His sorrowful Mother, He established a new phase in the Communion of Saints. Henceforth, Mary was to be the great Mother of the race: we were to be to her as sons. From her exalted position she was to hearken to the prayers of her spiritual children on earth. This relationship did not necessarily end at death, but rather assumed a new form. Her sublime station in heaven was but the climax of her prerogatives and the pledge of her power of impetration. By inference, those who were to join her in the celestial realm became participants, each in his own way, of a correspondingly higher power of intercession.

The opinions and belief of the Fathers noticed above bear out this statement. The Church in her canonical enactments and in her devotional practices endeavored by word and precept to inculcate this belief in the value and the advantage of invoking the saints of God. Her guiding principle seems ever to have been that if the faithful may pray for one another in this life it must be because there is some value in such a prayer; because a person given to a life of holiness can intercede efficaciously with God; and because proximity to the source of grace enables one to more effectively participate in its bounty. Hence, her fervent prayers to the martyrs, to the Apostles, and to the angels. Hence, again, the world-wide devotion at certain shrines — a devotion often rewarded with well-authenticated miraculous favors.

This faith then, as we noted, took on a liturgical

aspect when the Church not only permitted and sometimes publicly resorted to the invocation of the saints, but actually incorporated this part of her doctrine in those works which she daily places in the hands of her ministers and of the faithful in general.

Here again it may be well to observe that not only in the ritual of the Western Church are prayers to the saints found, but in the liturgies of all the Oriental Churches as well as nearly every one of those sects [115] that wandered from the true fold centuries before the dawn of European defection. And since the Eastern heretical bodies were once a part of the Catholic Church, their doctrine, being still consonant with ours on this point, is a valuable proof of the extent and universality of the doctrine itself.

It would be tedious, not to say impossible, to present all the arguments furnished from these Oriental Rituals. A few will suffice to indicate the general trend of belief.

In the Liturgy of St. James the Apostle, used by the Jacobites: "Gracious and merciful God, grant that he who by a singular favor is privileged to celebrate the memory of the Virgin Mary, may by her prayers which are efficacious and pleasing to Thee, obtain what he implores." [116]

The reason is given why we invoke the Saints: "We venerate the memory of thy elect, that whilst they stand before thy throne, they may be mindful of our weakness, and may together with us, offer to Thee this awe-inspiring and unbloody Sacrifice." [117]

[115] Renaudot says that the invocation of saints is found in every Eastern sect without exception.— *Lit. Orient. Coll.* t. ii, p. 96, ed. 1847.

[116] Renaudot, op. c. t. ii, p. 17.

[117] *Lit. S. Jac. Ap. Frat. Dom.*— Renaudot, l. c. p. 36.

In the Liturgy of St. Cyril, after begging God to be mindful of all the Saints, the priest adds: "We, O Lord, are not worthy to pray for them; but rather since they stand before the throne of thy only-begotten Son, let them make intercession in our place, and for our weakness and poverty." [118]

In reference to a particular Saint the Liturgy of St. Basil says: "Be mindful, O Lord, of this Saint whose memory we celebrate to-day, and of all thy Saints, through whose prayers and intercession do Thou have mercy on us." [119]

Among the prayers found in the Syro-Chaldaic and Nestorian rites in the consecration of a Bishop, we find a list of the great champions and doctors of the faith, and at the end: "May their prayers be to us a wall and a tower of strength." [120]

In the Alexandrian Missal: "Be mindful, O Lord, of all the saints who have pleased Thee from the beginning . . . and through their prayers and entreaties do Thou have mercy on us all." [121]

In the Mass of the catechumens according to the Abyssinian Jacobites the people say: "Holy apostle Paul, goodly messenger, healer of the sick, thou hast received the crown: pray and intercede for us: cause our souls to be saved in the multitude of His loving kindness and His mercy for His holy Name's sake." [122]

It is worthy of note that the Church in all her official prayers, whether addressed to God directly or to the Saints, always ends with these words which point to

[118] Op. c. t. i, p. 41.
[119] *Lit. S. Basil. Alexand.*, Renaudot, I, p. 70.
[120] Assemani, *Codex Liturg. Univer.* t. xiii, p. 51. Ed. Paris, 1902.
[121] Assemani, op. c., t. vii, p. 61–62.
[122] *Liturg. Abyss. Jac.* Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, t. i, p. 213, ed. 1896.

the mediatorship of Christ, the source of all power of impetration: "Through Christ our Lord." For she recognizes that, after all, we must draw near to God, "through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received reconciliation." [123]

As regards Luther and the reformers it must be said that Luther himself at the outset did not deny the Communion of Saints.[124] Later on he found that it clashed with his theory of merit and faith, and he was forced to reject it. His later understanding of the expression was that, "The Holy Ghost has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me by his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith." [125]

The Reformed Churches understand the Communion of Saints to be a union of all those who have been gathered and preserved out of the whole human race, from the beginning, by the Son of God.[126] Also that the members must recognize that they have received their gifts from God — from Christ — and must use these gifts for the welfare of other members.[127] This idea, however, is narrowed down to a union with members on earth, as we learn later on. For we are told that we must "avoid and flee all idolatry, sorcery, enchantments, *invocation of saints.*" [128]

According to the Westminster Confession, "Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son,

[123] *Rom.* v, 11.
[124] Cf. *Werke,* II, p. 190 — Weimar, 1884.
[125] *Luther's Small Catechism,* part ii, the third article.— Schaff, *Creeds,* III, p. 80.
[126] *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563 and 1863). Q. liv.
[127] Q. lv.—Schaff, III, 325.
[128] Q. xciv.— Schaff, III, 342.

and Holy Ghost, and to Him alone: not to angels, saints, or any other creature . . . nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone." [129]

Zwinglius admits that we may pray for one another on earth provided that we place all confidence in Christ,[130] but there is but one Mediator between God and man.[131]

The famous Augsburg Confession warns us that, "the Scripture teacheth not to invoke saints, or to ask help of saints, because it propoundeth unto us one Christ the Mediator, Propitiatory, High-Priest, and Intercessor." [132]

After what has been said, however, it is evident that the reformers have missed the meaning of Scripture and of the Fathers from the very first age of the Faith. Rather, they have wilfully distorted this palpable evidence which stands out in such bold relief throughout the whole history of the Church. Following up their principle of reform, wherever they saw an abuse they struck at the very root of the doctrine itself. They denied anything and everything that did not fit into the monstrous fabric of unbelief which they had reared as a monument of the folly of man when left to his own resources in matters of religion.

This doctrine, therefore, of the Invocation of Saints was so deeply rooted in the early Church that it is not surprising that it afterward took on various external forms, and that festivals were instituted in their name, pilgrimages undertaken to their shrines, litanies sung in their honor, and that finally they were officially

[129] *Westmin. Conf.*, 1647. Ch. xxi, n. 2.— Schaff, III, 646, Cf. also chap. xxvi, p. 659.
[130] *Sixty-seven Articles of Zwinglius*, a. xx.— Schaff, III, 200.
[131] *Art.* xix.
[132] *Art.* xxi.— *Schaff*, III, 26.

raised to a special dignity in that Church which they had so well defended, so ardently loved, and so highly extolled and glorified in their actions, life, and death.

As a pious and intelligent person once remarked to Cardinal Wiseman: "Our devotions to the saints may be compared to their representations on our beautiful old church windows: when seen from without, they present but dark surfaces and ill-shaped outlines; when from within the church, they seem to glow with the rich and varied light of heaven in pure and majestic forms." [133]

This, in a word, is the difference between the Catholic and the non-Catholic viewpoint of the Saints of God, and the Invocation we exercise towards them.

[133] Ward, *Life and Times of Card. Wiseman*, t. i, p. 403.

CHAPTER III

INTERCESSION — THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT

E Beatrice disse: Ecco le schiere
Del trionfo di Cristo, e tutto 'l frutto
Ricolto. — *La Div. Com.*[1]

THE doctrines of the Catholic Church have ever been exposed to the assaults of pagans and infidels as well as to the petulant attack of a few dissatisfied and disgruntled individuals among her own children. These faithless members of the universal Church were invariably led on by passion, pride, or prejudice. This is the synthesis of heresy. Where they have cut adrift from every vestige of Christianity they invariably fell back into the slough of paganism. In the majority of cases, however, they retained some part of their original belief. Since their motives were prompted by various causes, the natural and logical result was a widespread wreckage of flotsam and jetsam scattered on the vast sea of religion, each sect clinging to some semblance to the original whole. Whence it is, that we find the older denominations large and small still retaining among the scars of unbelief some mark or sign that points to a former union with the center of Catholic belief.

[1] . . . Behold,"
Cried Beatrice, "the triumphal hosts
Of Christ, and all the harvest gathered in."
— *Paradiso*, c. xxiii.

"In every heretical sect the dominant note is one of discord. The heretic can never be in accord with the Church from which he has separated, and by whom he stands condemned; nor with himself, since the doctrine which he stills retains is an ever present condemnation and reprobation of his impious innovations; nor finally can he agree with other heretics, since the licentious liberty which he arrogates in matter of religion is but too well imitated by other heretics. Hence, as St. Augustine observes,[2] 'It is an almost invariable characteristic of all heretics to rashly endeavor to overthrow the solid and irrefragable authority of the Catholic Church, in the name, and with the promise of unfettered reason.'"[3]

It is not therefore to be wondered that the belief, so fondly cherished by Christians of all ages, in the impetratory power of God's champions, should be violently assailed by those who have forfeited their birthright and surrendered their Christian heritage.

The Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church assure us in all seriousness that, "The Romish doctrine concerning the Invocation of Saints is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded on no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God."[4] It shall be our endeavor in the present chapter to show how little this doctrine is repugnant to the Word of God as contained in the Scripture, as taught by the rightful custodians of that sacred Deposit, and as practised by those whose life and death exemplified in an heroic degree the teachings of the Master.

As has been explained in a previous chapter, Christ

[2] *Ep.* 56.
[3] Monsig. Martini, *Com.* in I *Tim.* vi, 5.
[4] *Art.* xxii.

gave His Apostles the power and the mission to go forth and teach all nations, not only of His own time, but until the end of the world. It was therefore incumbent upon them to present, in a concrete form, the main tenets of belief, and to leave for further elucidation those various points of doctrine that might from time to time be assailed. The doctrines, therefore, of the unity of God, the divinity of Christ, justification through His merits, necessity of baptism, authority of the Church, and other kindred subjects were clearly set forth as necessary to salvation. When heresies arose, or when misunderstandings clouded the genuine belief, the Church guided by the Holy Ghost, and by Christ, who was to be with her all days, took up the question authoritatively, and settled all dispute by expressly defining the true significance of the point at issue. Thus, to cite an instance, when the Greeks denied the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, and rejected the "Filioque" in the Creed, the Church condemned their temerity, and placed this doctrine in clear and unmistakable light.

So it came to pass that in the ages succeeding the apostolic epoch the words, Communion of Saints, were added to the Symbol. It is still disputed as to when, or where, or for what reason the article in question was actually incorporated into the Symbol. The dogma itself does not in any way depend for its defence on the solution of this historical problem, but as we have shown, it rests upon a more profound basis — tradition and the spirit of Holy Writ.

Not a few early Fathers, as well as some later theologians, wrote treatises on the Symbol, or Profession of Faith. There were various symbols differing in the wording, but only three have been accepted by the

Catholic Church[5] Hence the doctrine of these commentaries is uniform.

The first explicit mention that we have of the clause, Communion of Saints, occurs in a short treatise generally attributed to Nicetas of Remesiana, in Dacia. The date is uncertain, but it would appear that he flourished about the year 400.[6] As this passage is important we shall give it at length. He is speaking to the *competentes,* those who had been instructed in the faith and were asking baptism. He says:

"After confessing the Blessed Trinity, you make a profession of faith in the Holy Catholic Church. What is the Church, but the assembly of all the saints? For from the beginning of the world the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and the other just men who ever lived, now live, or ever shall be, all form one Church; for being sanctified by the same faith and manner of life, bearing the impress of the same Spirit, they have become one body: and the head of the body is Christ (Col. i, 18). Nay more, even the Angels, the Virtues, and other heavenly powers, are all joined together in this same Church, as the Apostle teaches us, 'Through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, making peace through the blood of His cross, both as to the things on earth, and the things that are in heaven.'[7] Believe, therefore, that in this Church alone you will be enrolled in the *Communion of Saints.*"[8]

[5] The Apostolic Symbol, the Nicene, and the so-called Athanasian.

[6] Vawdrey (non-Catholic), *Communion of Saints*, p. 36, admits that it is somewhere between 370–420.

[7] *Col.* i, 20.

[8] *Pat. Lat.* LII, 871.—In the appendix to the works of St. Augustine there is a sermon, not assigned to this Doctor, in which the words are used: "Sequitur, Sanctorum commun-

It is clear from the above, without further comment, that Nicetas had a true conception of the article, Holy Catholic Church, of which the Communion of Saints is nothing more than an explicit elucidation. It is merely emphasizing the κοινωνία ἁγίων — the fellowship of Saints.

Another mention is made of the article in the work on the Holy Ghost now generally ascribed to Faustus of Riez (b. about 405). He says: "What follows in the Symbol after the name of the Holy Ghost, is received in this sense. We believe the Holy Catholic Church, the *communion of saints,* the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, life everlasting." [9]

We might mention also the Gallican Liturgy. In an old Missal belonging to that rite we find in the recitation of the Creed: "I believe in the Holy Ghost . . . the communion of saints." [10]

These few passages are quoted merely to show that the clause, Communion of Saints, was added at a later period than the composition of the various professions of faith, and that it was looked upon as embodied in the article, Holy Catholic Church.

As to the reason why this addition was made to the words of the Creed, or what fact occasioned this explicit profession, we do not know. Conjecture has given birth to various suggestions, some attributing it to the necessity of fully explaining the faith against the Arians or Donatists, whilst others see a direct blow aimed at Vigilantius. If we may be permitted

ionem. Credentes, ergo, sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam, sanctorum habentes communionem, quia ubi est fides sancta, ibi est et sancta communio," etc. *Serm.* 241. *P. L.* xxxix, 2191.

[9] *P. L.* lxii, col. II — Migne here assigned this work to Paschasius.

[10] *P. L.* lxxii, 349.

to express an opinion on the subject, we think that the addition came about naturally, as that of any other elucidation in the Church's teaching Since Aërius [11] in the East and Vigilantius in the West, both in the fourth century,[12] denied that prayer was to be offered for the dead, or that the saints intercede for us, it is not at all improbable that as a check to the spread of their pernicious errors it gradually became customary — especially in regions infected by their errors — to lay stress on the full meaning of the *Holy Catholic Church.* This principle has been ever followed by the Church in all points of doctrine vigorously assailed by heretics, as may be seen in the history of the *Filioque,* the doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist when attacked by Berengarius, and other matters of moment. In fact, it was while explaining to heretics the full meaning of the words, Holy Catholic Church, that the work ascribed to Faustus of Riez brings out the further significance of the Communion of Saints.

Once more, therefore, we repeat, this doctrine rests on higher and more certain ground than the historical discussion as to the time of its first appearance in the Creed.

Catholic theology teaches us that the essential happiness of the saints in heaven consists in their vision of the Godhead. As God is their first beginning so is He their last end. Absolutely speaking, therefore, the contemplation of the Beatific Vision constitutes the prime cause of joy and bliss among the blessed denizens of the heavenly kingdom. So true is this that, as St. Thomas explains, were there but one soul in

[11] St. Epiphan., *Adv. Haers.,* 75.

[12] Cf. Kirsch, *Com. of Saints in the Ancient Church,* p. 254–69. Eng. ed.

heaven that soul would be supremely happy.[13] For it would possess God who is the source of all beatitude in His creatures. Presupposing, however, as the Angelic Doctor adds,[14] the existence of other rational beings, that soul naturally in an exuberance of love expands its affection towards those whom God Himself loves. This solicitude of the saints for their brethren is amply unfolded in the pages of Holy Writ, where we see the idea of a communion of works and merits referred to in numerous ways, and where many passages are well nigh unintelligible except under the light of this power of intercession which the Church has always attributed to the saints.

Now in order to grasp thoroughly the central doctrine of the Catholic Church on this question we must bear in mind that Faith opens up to our mental vision the whole universe as the work of God. The Church is not confined in her operations to this material world. She refuses to recognize death as an insurmountable barrier: death, indeed, has for her no terrors at all, for she looks upon it as indeed a necessity, but only as a single phase of the grand plan of redemption and salvation, a mere form prerequisite to the acquisition and fruition of that happiness which is the goal of every intelligent being. The Church does not belong entirely to Time, but reaches out in her aspirations, in her yearnings, and in her promises, to an unending eternity. Death, it is true, is the necessary consequence of sin, "for the wages of sin is death."[15] But the Church is the vicegerent of Christ, and Christ conquered Death. She is likewise

[13] *Sum. Theolog.* I–II, q. iv, a. 8.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Rom. vi, 23.

the depositary of the "grace of God," and thus she triumphs over death, since this grace is naught else than "life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord." [16] The power which she possesses is spiritual: it extends to the soul of man, and his soul is immortal. It is her duty, her task to prepare men for an immortality of happiness. Hence, death, the material dissolution of man's inferior part, does not take away her interest in his soul. She follows him beyond the grave: follows him, to offer assistance if he is still in need, and to implore his coöperation if he be already admitted to the enjoyment of that life of exquisite delights for which she labored to prepare him.[17] She teaches her children to look upon the passing of the soul from the body as a mere ceremony preliminary to his entrance into the joys of paradise.

It is a noteworthy fact that the early Christians, deeply imbued with this idea, rarely speak of the death of their loved ones.[18] Ancient epigraphy almost invariably informs us that such an one fell asleep in the Lord, that his spirit rests in God, that he slumbers, that he rests in peace, that here he awaits the resurrection.[19] True, Scripture employs the term, death, indiscriminately, but the piety of the faithful

[16] Ibid.

[17] This solicitude contrasts strongly with the attitude of some non-Catholic bodies. "We do not think that it is strange that Methodism has not produced a literature on this thing of prayers for the dead. Methodism is practical. The land immediately beyond the grave is shrouded in loving mystery; there is scant revelation. Therefore Methodism is silent."—*Central Christian Advocate.* in *Lit. Digest,* Apr. 20, 1907.

[18] In the old inscriptions we frequently find, *depositus, depositio, dormitio,* all indicating a temporary separation, to be followed by reunion.— Liverani, *Le Catacombe di Chiusi* (p. 150), tells us he found, as an exception, a pagan inscription with the word, *depositio.*

[19] *Hic jacet, hic dormit, in pace, in Domino, in* ☧ etc.

reserved the softer and more soothing euphemism mentioned above.

What pathos in the comforting assurance "ACILIUS, THOU SHALT LIVE IN GOD." [20] What calm resignation in the farewell, "PAULINE, MAY YOU REST IN PEACE." [21] What could be more expressive of faith in the resurrection, and a deep confidence in the hope of a speedy reunion, than the beautiful simplicity that breathes forth in the inscription found in the cemetery of St. Priscilla: "To ISIDORA, WHO SLUMBERETH."

These and many similar examples to be met with everywhere in early Christian epigraphy have a charm that bespeaks purity and simplicity of faith in the highest and most heroic degree.[22] They were uttered at a time when the faithful on every hand were falling by thousands. Human reason would deplore such a calamity as irreparable: the faith of those heroes and heroines saw in it nothing more than a mere slumber, a parting for a time, painful to the survivors, it is true, but by no means final. Their tender requests: Remember us, pray for us, be mindful of us, for thou art in peace — all bear testimony to a high and heroic quality of faith that mocks the tomb, that laughs at death as the end of all, and that speaks to the departed with unwavering trustfulness, as if they still were

[20] Marucchi, *Guide*, p. 424.

[21] Op. c. 428.

[22] Byron, strolling through the Certosa, or cemetery, of Bologna, found a source of deep feeling in the inscriptions there. "Martini Luigi implora pace"; "Lucrezia Picini implora eterna quiete." "These two words," says the poet, "comprise and compress all that can be said on the subject. . . . They contain doubt, hope, and humility; nothing can be more pathetic than the 'implora' and the modesty of the request. . . . There is all the helplessness, and humble hope, and death-like prayer, that can arise from the grave —'implora pace.'"— Moore, *Letters and Journ. of Lord Byron.* London, 1883, t. ii, p. 472–6.

present. This is not merely the faith of the simple Christian, but the firm conviction of the highest prelates as well. The touching appeal of Pope St. Damasus to St. Agnes,[23] asking her prayers, is but a pious supplication from the head of the Church to the glorious virgin and child martyr. The reason thereof is, *quia scimus te in Christo*, for we know that thou art with Christ.[24]

Some of the agitators of the sixteenth century alleged such puerile objections, as the distance from heaven to earth, as a reason why the saints could not hear our prayers, and thus would not intercede for us, except in a general way. St. Jerome answered this objection first raised by Vigilantius, by saying that if the demons and fallen angels are allowed to roam at will in order to tempt men, there is no good reason why the martyrs after suffering death for Christ should not be permitted at least to know our prayers and to come to our assistance.[25]

Now, Christ tells us that there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner doing penance.[26] Joy, that is, among the angels and saints, for the saints in glory are like

[23] This inscription is as follows. It was placed over the entrance to the Catacomb of St. Agnes:

FAMA REFERT SANCTOS DVDVM RETVLISSE PARENTES
AGNEN CVM LVGVBRES CANTVS TVBA CONCREPVISSET
NVTRICIS GREMIVM SVBITO LIQVISSE PVELLAM
SPONTE TRVCIS CALCASSE MINAS RABIEMQVE TYRANNI
VRERE CVM FLAMMIS VOLVISSET NOBILE CORPVS
VIRIBVS IMMENSVM PARVIS SVPERASSE TIMOREM
NVDAQVE PROFVSVM CRINEM PER MEMBRA DEDISSE
NE DOMINI TEMPLVM FACIES PERITVRA VIDERET
O VENERANDA MIHI SANCTVM DECVS ALMA PVDORIS
VT DAMASI PRECIBVS FAVEAS PRECOR INCLYTA MARTYR.
— Marucchi, *Guide des Cat. Rom.*, p. 318.

[24] See p. 43.
[25] *Adv. Vigilant*, n. 3.—*P. L.* xxiii, 359.
[26] *Luke* xv, 10.

unto the angels.[27] Although it may be admitted that the saints are far removed from us, and that they cannot of their own mere volition take part in events upon earth, there are many instances where by a special dispensation of Almighty God they have done so; nay, in this life they have sometimes become cognizant of facts and happenings far distant in place and in time. When the king of Syria made war on the Israelites, Eliseus the Prophet, though at a distance, knew all that was transpiring. To the king's query as to who it was that gave news to the Israelites, his officers answered: "No one, my Lord O king: but Eliseus the prophet, that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel all the words that thou speakest in thy privy chamber."[28] It is well known that the prophets frequently possessed knowledge of distant events. In the same way St. Peter by divine knowledge was made acquainted with the falseness of Ananias and Sapphira.[29] If the angels rejoice over the repentance of the sinner how do they acquire this knowledge? Evidently by divine interposition. And shall we say that the saints cannot by the same means hear the prayers which we direct to them? To deny this is to limit the power of God.

The Scripture is replete with examples of men on earth interceding, and indeed, efficaciously, for their brethren. In fact, St. James tells us to pray for one another that we may be saved: "for the prayer of the just man availeth much";[30] how much more the prayer of one who is already close to the source and fountain of all grace in heaven! Nay, the Lord God of heaven on some occasions told certain individuals to ask the prayers of his holy men, and promised

[27] *Matt.* xxii, 30.
[28] IV *Kings* vi, 12.
[29] *Acts* v, 3.
[30] *St. James* v, 16.

help or life on this one condition. After threatening Abimelech with death, God tells him that his life will be spared if Abraham prays for him. The holy man does so, and "when Abraham prayed, God healed Abimelech and his wife." [31]

Moses also prayed for the people in their distress over the deaths caused by the serpents, and when he prayed for them, the Lord heard him, and healed the people.[32] Samuel by his prayers for the people at their request, drew down the blessing and help of God and victory over their enemies.[33] The story of Job and his friends is too familiar to every one to need repetition here.[34]

If there is a passage in Holy Writ more convincing than anything else in regard to the prayers of the saints and angels, it surely is the description given in the Apocalypse by the Apostle who soared above all the others in tracing the divine origin of the Redeemer.

This privileged Saint beheld a vision of the throne of God in heaven. The Omnipotent One was seated midst a dazzling glory of refulgent splendor. There the Apostle beheld,

> eternal light!
> Sole in thyself that dwell'st: and of thyself
> Sole understood, past, present, or to come.[35]

"And round about the throne were four-and-twenty seats: and upon the seats, four-and-twenty ancients

[31] *Gen.* xx, 7–17.
[32] *Num.* xxi, 9.
[33] I *Kings* vii, 10.
[34] *Job* xlii.
[35] O luce eterna, che sola in te sidi,
Sola t' intendi, e da te 'ntelletta
Ed intendente te ami e arridi.
— *Div. Com. Paradiso,* c. xxxiii.

sitting, clothed in white garments, and on their heads were crowns of gold." [36] The mysterious book with seven seals is brought in: when it is opened, "the four-and-twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints." [37] Shortly afterward, "another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God, from the hand of the angel." [38]

Here we see that not only the angels but the saints, symbolized by the ancients, offer up to God prayers for others. Their intellects bask in the "everlasting splendor" of the Godhead, until they

> Hover the brink of dread infinitude.[39]

Without losing their individuality they are enveloped as in a shoreless ocean of purest delights. They behold the ever-blessed Trinity, as the poet truly expresses it:

> In that abyss
> Of radiance, clear and lofty, seem'd, methought,
> Three orbs of triple hue, clipped in one bound:
> And, from another, one reflected seem'd
> As rainbow is from rainbow: and the third
> Seem'd fire, breathed equally from both.[40]

[36] *Apoc.* iv, 4.
[37] Ibid. v, 8.
[38] Ibid. viii, 3, 4.
[39] . . . Io giunsi
L'aspetto mio col valor infinito.
— *Paradiso*, l. c.
[40] *Div. Com.* l. c. (Cary's tr.).

Moreover, their wills are perfectly attuned to the divine Will, so that the charity and love which God cherishes for mankind finds loving response in the blessed who live and exist in the most consummate conformity to the wishes of their Lord. Their wills are fixed steadfast, and they cannot but will what is pleasing to God. Of Jeremias it was said: "This is a lover of his brethren, and of the people of Israel: this is he that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city, Jeremias, the prophet of God." [41]

In like manner do all the saints in heaven. For the charity, which on earth made them powerful with God, being now perfected and increased, must extend itself beyond the mere confines of self-enjoyment, even as the charity of God reaches out to every created being in heaven and on earth. For in that haven of eternal content charity glows brightly, and is purified of all earthly dross, so that it loves more ardently and offers up prayer more effectively in that it is purer, and therefore more pleasing to God. Truly, "charity never falleth away." [42] If we are bidden here below to pray for one another that our salvation be assured,[43] it is inconceivable that those fortunate enough to reach the goal of their yearning and aspirations should entirely forget the persons who perhaps, under God, were the chief instruments of salvation to them. For death "frees the soul from the bonds of mortality, not of charity." [44]

[41] II *Mach.* xv, 14.
[42] I *Cor.* xiii, 8.
[43] *Jas.* v, 16.
[44] "Nexibus expedita mortalitatis, non caritatis." Petrus Cellen., l. i, *ep.* 16.— Many of these men were saints even in life, as we see at Christ's death; "many bodies of the saints that had slept, arose, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many." *Matt.* xxvii, 52–53.

This viewpoint therefore should never be lost sight of in speaking of the intercession of the saints. Once we have grasped the meaning of grace and charity it is difficult to understand how the saints should not pray for those on earth. Christ, in teaching us to pray, intimated the charity that should animate us at all times. Whence, as St. Cyprian says, "We do not say, My Father, but, Our Father; nor, give me, but, give us; for He wished each one to pray for all."[45] If we are commanded to love our enemies, how much more our friends? And the very essence of love is that it strives to promote the good and the happiness of the object loved. If love impelled the martyrs while on earth to pray for others, and to intercede for them, as we see among many examples, in the case of the *Lapsi,* how much more will they not be solicitous for their brethren, after having attained, as St. Jerome says, "their crown, victory, and triumph"?[46]

From this it would seem clearly to follow that the saints intercede not merely as utter mendicants, but partly in view of their own sufferings and merits by which they have become, in an inferior way, co-partners in the suffering of Christ, to "fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ."[47]

This is not a strange doctrine. It is summed up by the Angelic Doctor, arguing from Scripture and reason, in these words: "Charity is more powerful with God than with men; and since one may now through love for another satisfy for what is lacking in the latter, with much greater reason can this be done in regard to man's debt toward God."[48] That this is no

[45] *De Orat. Dom.*
[46] *Adv. Vigilant.* n. 6.
[47] *Col.* i, 24.
[48] *Supplem.* q. xiii, a. 2.

idle speculation appears from the history of the primitive Church.

During the storm of persecution it sometimes happened that here and there weak Christians, unable to resist the allurements of the flesh, fell away from their baptismal promises, and thus became apostates, subject to all the rigors of canonical discipline then exercised towards such unfortunates. In this predicament they often went to the martyrs in prison, and in a spirit of remorse begged these champions of the faith to intercede for them with the ecclesiastical authorities. This gave rise to a custom that became very prevalent. The martyrs would encourage the repentance of their weaker brethren, and in view of their own sufferings and merits, would write to the bishops what was termed a *libellus martyrum*. In this they begged the prelates to commiserate the weakness of their less courageous comrades, and to receive them back into the Church. In view of the grand merits and heroism of the champions this pardon frequently was granted. This, then, was naught else but a communication of the merits of one person to the needs of another; it was practically an efficacious act of intercession and impetration. In other words, the sinner, with the consent of the martyrs, drew upon the latters' merits, and these merits formed a part of the grand Treasury of the Church, which was composed of the superabundant merits of Christ and of the Saints. If this much could be accomplished by the saints on earth, there appears to be no legitimate reason why such power should be denied the saints in glory; especially since the *libellus* was simply a proof of charity on the part of the martyrs, and charity is not diminished, but rather increased in heaven. Nor is there any difficulty in ad-

mitting the possibility of such a practice so far as concerns Almighty God: for He surely is not less easily moved by the entreaties of His servants in glory than when they were still in exile.

Eusebius, in his History, has handed down a narrative which well illustrates this idea. Potamiæna, who lived at the time of Origen, was a Christian virgin. She was as renowned for her beauty of form as for her intense love of purity. When she was condemned by Aquila, the judge, to every sort of torment and outrage, one of the soldiers, Basilides by name, who was guarding her, struck with her beauty and maidenly modesty, interposed himself between her and the crowds that surrounded her. She thanked him, and promised, after her martyrdom, to intercede with God for him. She kept this promise. For the historian adds that three days after her death she appeared to Basilides, told him her prayer to God for him had been answered, and that he would die a Christian. This was soon verified, and Basilides gave his life for the faith.[49]

The Fathers of the Church, those pillars of tradition and authentic witnesses of the true doctrine of the Apostles, unite in proclaiming the power of the saints to intercede for the faithful on earth. The more voluminous of those holy doctors have woven many beautiful panegyrics on the martyrs and the blessed of God. These eulogies are replete with proofs of the faith that animated both speaker and auditors. They almost invariably call upon the holy martyr for protection, strength, and intercession. Now, all this is absolutely unintelligible if we admit the slightest doubt

[49] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* l. vi, c. 4 (ed. Cologne, 1570).

in their minds as to the efficacy of that power of impetration which they so fervently implore.

The grand idea which St. Augustine later developed, in *The City of God,* with regard to the union of the whole Church — embracing both living and dead — is found in Clement of Alexandria, who lived in the second century, and numbered among his pupils the great Origen. Clement speaks of the duty of a true Christian to pray much and often. Prayer is the whole life of such a man.[50] He urges the Christian to pray with confidence, "for he prays with the angels, since he is never without their protection, and although he may be alone he has the choir of angels ever assisting him in his prayer." [51]

Origen himself (d. 254) affirms it as his belief that, "all the saints who have gone before us, help us in our fight, and aid us by their prayers." [52]

Elsewhere he declares it will not be wrong to say that "all the saints who have departed this life retain their love towards those who are still in the world: that they are solicitous for the salvation of these brethren, and help them with their intercession and prayers to God." [53]

Speaking, then, of the various kinds of prayer, he declares, that the saints are to be invoked for help and assistance. Distinguishing the different degrees of prayer in general he says: "Petitions and thanksgiving may be offered to men, but prayer (Δέησις) to the saints only; as to Peter and Paul, that they may help us, and render us worthy to enjoy the privilege granted to them of the remission of sins." [54]

[50] *Strom.* l. vii, c. 12 — *P. G.* ix, 502.
[51] Op. c. col. 510.
[52] *In lib. Jesu,* hom. xvii, *P. G.* xii, 909.
[53] *In Cantic. Cant.* l. iii, n. 4. *P. G.* xiii, 160.
[54] *De Orat.* c. 14. *P. G.* xi, 463.

During the period of persecution, St. Cyprian, in Africa, wrote to the pope, St. Cornelius, a touching letter concerning the sufferings of the faithful, and praising the Pontiff for the noble example which that holy man had set the Church. St. Cyprian ends his letter with the exhortation: "Whichever one of us is first called hence by the divine mercy, let him before God be mindful of our love, and let him not cease to implore the compassion of the Father for the brethren." [55]

St. Basil, in a burst of fervor, in speaking of the Forty Martyrs, exclaims: "O sacred choir! Noble host! Valiant protectors of the human race! Faithful companions in our cares! Intercessors in our prayers! Most powerful ambassadors!" [56]

St. Augustine, invoking Sts. Paul and Stephen, reminds them: "There ye behold each other; ye both hear our prayer: pray ye both for us." [57]

The motive of our reliance on the saints is pointed out by the same holy doctor [58] as an unshaken confidence in their power: "We do not make remembrance of the martyrs at the holy table, as we do for others who have fallen asleep, as if we pray for them: but rather that they may be induced to pray for us." [59]

[55] *Ep.* 13, *ad Cornelium.* *P. L.* iii, 860.
[56] *Hom. in XL Mart.* *P. G.* xxxi, 524.
[57] *Serm* 316 (al. 94) De Diversis.
[58] "Ad ipsam mensam non sic eos (*martyrs*) commemoramus quemadmodum alios qui in pace requieverunt, ut etiam pro his oremus, sed magis ut ipsi pro nobis." *In Joan.* tract. 84. *P. L.* xxxv, 1847.
[59] It may be here remarked that one or two of the early Fathers thought that the souls in hell would eventually be saved. St. Augustine condemns this opinion. In *De Civitate Dei* the holy Doctor devotes a whole chapter against those who claimed that the prayers of the saints would effect this final rescue. He notes that if the damned and the rebel angels could ever be saved the Church would pray for them now, since she prays even for

If we turn to the liturgical authorities of the early Church the same arguments confront us. Not only in the Roman texts does the intercession of saints stand forth in undimmed luster, but with equal splendor does it reflect from almost every page of the various liturgies in use among the Orientals from the very beginning of Christianity. To add weight and crushing force to the argument even the heretical sects that parted company with the true Church in the first centuries seem to have clung tenaciously to this dogma. The fact that men of the stamp and mental caliber of Aërius denied this belief should not cause the least qualm in this regard. For the bitter denunciation they met with on all sides is proof of the strength and solidity of the faith as then practised by all.

These heretical bodies not only held fast to this doctrine, but some even declared that their liturgies were derived from the Apostles themselves. Their liturgical acts are replete with direct reference to the saints and their prayers for us.

In the so-called Liturgy of St. Basil, the priest after incensing the altar, says: "Now, O Lord, following the precept of thy only-begotten Son, do we make remembrance of the saints . . . (*here follows a long list*) through whose prayers and supplication do Thou have mercy on us, and deliver us." [60]

In the Coptic Liturgy of St. Cyril, used by the Jacobites, or Eutychians, the priest, after commemorating many saints, adds: "And we, O Lord, are unworthy to pray for these holy men; but since they stand before

her enemies. But the former are already beyond the possibility of change, since their wills are fixed fast in evil, and thus in the truest sense, "in hell there is no redemption."— Cf. *De Civ.* l. xxi, c. 24. *P. L.* xli.

[60] Renaudot, *Lit. Orient. Coll.* t. i, p. 17. Ed. Paris, 1847.

the throne of thy only-begotten Son, let them in our stead make supplication for our poverty and weakness. Do Thou forgive our trespasses through their intercession." [61]

The Liturgy of St. James uses almost the same words, and expresses the idea with more detail, begging the saints to take part in the tremendous Sacrifice which is being offered up, " for the protection of the living; for the solace of the weak and unworthy, as we are; for the rest and remembrance of those who have already departed in the truth faith." [62]

Again, in the Liturgy of St. Clement, after a long commemoration of saints: " Do thou, O Lord, through their prayers, be merciful to us sinners." [63]

The Ignatian Liturgy explains the same fact, and asks aid, " through their prayers which are worthy to be heard." [64]

In the Western Liturgies there is no doubt at all any more than in those of the East. One and all they pray openly and designedly to the saints to help us.

It may now be permitted to inquire as to the manner in which the saints in heaven hear our prayers. Like many other questions of interest in matters of doctrine, the Church has not definitely declared herself on this point. The puerile objections of Calvin and others, that the saints are too far away, that they care not for what goes on here below, are too frivolous to need confutation. We shall simply state the opinions of a few doctors of the Church — giants of intellect

[61] Renaudot, I, p. 41.
[62] Op. c. ii, p. 36.
[63] II, p. 194.
[64] *Lit. Ignat. Patr.* op. c. ii, p. 515. Many more of these liturgies are found in the various collections, and they all profess the same belief on this point. Cf. Liturgies of St. John, Dioscorus, John Patriarch, Matthaeus Pastor, etc.

and towers of strength in the vast field of religious discussion.

That they do somehow hear us and pray for us, as we have shown, is the sense of Scripture and Tradition as well as the constant and universal teaching of the Church.[65] This fact is further demonstrated by the countless miracles wrought by God at their prayers.

St. Augustine, in his admirable work, *De Cura pro Mortuis Gerenda*,[66] thus explains his opinion. He states that the saints of themselves, of their own inherent powers, cannot see or hear aught that transpires among mortals. Still, that they do in some way hear us he has not the slightest doubt.[67] He opines that it takes place through the direct revelation made by God to the saints; although he adds, it may be, too, that the angels or other departed souls may acquaint them with what concerns them. He insists nevertheless that God reveals to them whatever it behooves them to know. Just as God disclosed to the prophets all that concerned their mission: as saints in the Old Testament frequently appeared to the living, and as did Moses in the New Testament; so, he thinks, God reveals to the saints whatever He wishes them to know. In this way He acquaints the martyrs with our prayers. The holy Doctor admits, however, that, "this question is too deep for me to solve: hence I dare not presume to define which method God em-

[65] St. Bernard voices this tradition in his sermon on St. Victor. "Numquid coelestis habitatio animas quas admittit, durat, aut memoria privat, aut spoliat pietate? Latitudo coeli dilatat corda, non arctat; exhilarat mentes, non alienat; affectiones non contrahit, sed extendit."—*Serm.* II, *de S. Victore.*

[66] *P. L.* xl.

[67] St. Athanasius expresses the same idea. "De animabus sanctorum non est dubitandum: nam et post mortem et in die judicii cognoscent omnia."—Q. xi, *ad Antiochens.*

ploys in manifesting these things"[68] to the saints. He leaves us under the impression, however, that it is by a direct revelation.

Theodoret says that they know our prayers by the fact that they are established in the possession of eternal bliss, and this belongs to their complete happiness.[69]

St. Gregory the Great holds that the saints, "gazing into the brightness of the divine Majesty, behold everything, and nothing without escapes their beatified vision."[70]

In the mind of St. Basil the reason is that, "all the saints know everything that goes on without, since their incorporeal vision extends far beyond the range of corporeal sight, and embraces everything."[71]

St. Gregory Nazianzen says, writing to Thecla: "I am convinced that the souls of the saints perceive our affairs."[72]

Modern theologians generally accept the explanation given by St. Thomas. This Doctor explains that the happiness of the blessed in heaven consists essentially in an act of the intellect.[73] For since the intellect is the most perfect attribute of an intelligent nature, it is evident that the supreme enjoyment of that creature must depend upon the perfection of its intellectual nature. Wherefore, the more perfectly and clearly the intellect grasps the vision of God the more does the will participate in the universal bliss which flows from

[68] Chap. 16. *P. L.* xl, 607.
[69] *De Curandis Graecorum Affect.*, c. 8. *P. G.* lxxxiii.
[70] *De Moral.* l. xii, c. 21. *P. L.* lxxv, 999.
[71] *De Vera Virg.* *P. G.* xxx.
[72] Ep. 223, *ad Theclam.* *P. G.* xxxvii, 367.
[73] *Sum. Theol.* I, q. xxvi, a. 2.

the Beatific Vision. Now, he argues elsewhere,[74] the effect of the vision of God upon the elect in heaven is to satisfy every desire of which their purified natures are capable. Since, however, this natural capacity comprehends the possibility of knowing all things created and everything pertaining to themselves, it would seem to follow that they see in the Divine Word our petitions to them, and are cognizant of our wants and necessities. The saintly Doctor then adds: "Hence, it is that when Moses begged for a sight of the glory of God,[75] the Lord answered him: 'I will shew thee all good.' And St. Gregory commenting on this, remarks:[76] 'Of what can they be ignorant, who know Him who knows all things?'"[77]

At the same time we are warned of the vital distinction to be observed in praying for succor and help. "We may pray to a person in two ways," notes the Angelic Doctor; "first, by asking him with the assurance that he himself will grant our petition; secondly, with the hope that he will obtain our request. In the former manner we pray to God alone. . . . In the second, we pray to the holy Angels and to men, not indeed that through them God may learn our wishes, but rather that relying on their prayers and merits, our petitions may be favorably received. . . . This is clear from the method used by the Church in praying: for we ask the Blessed Trinity to have mercy on us: all holy creatures are requested to pray for us."[78]

[74] *Summa. Cont. Gent.* l. iii, c. 59. See also *Sum. Theol.* III, q. x, a. 2.

[75] *Exod.* xxxiii, 19: "And he said: Shew me thy glory."

[76] *Dial.* iv, c. 33. "Quia illic omnes communi claritate Deum conspiciunt, quid est quod ibi nesciunt, ubi scientem omnia sciunt?"—*P. L.* lxxvii, 376.

[77] *Cont. Gent.* l. c.

[78] II–II, q. lxxxiii, a. 4.

In offering supplication to the saints our object is merely to add strength and force to our demands by enlisting the help of those who not only understand our needs, but who also are in a better position to effect a favorable issue than we alone and unaided may often hope to do. To use the words of a great champion of the saints, "we simply ask them to assist us in doing what we ourselves are doing, since they, more effectively than we, can accomplish the same end; and because united with them, we can work more successfully than alone." [79]

Understanding the subject in this light there is no reason whatsoever for concluding, as the Gallican [Protestant] Church does, that "all imaginations of men concerning the intercession of dead saints [note the emphasis on the original, *des Saints trépassés*] are an abuse and a device of Satan to lead men from the right way of worship . . . and as derogating from the sacrifice and passion of Jesus Christ." [80] Such indeed would the doctrine of intercession prove to be did we pray to the saints in the first way mentioned above by St. Thomas. But far from derogating from the Passion of Jesus, we invariably give all honor to that august Sacrifice, by petitioning, "through Christ our Lord." If the martyrs in heaven are represented as begging vengeance on their persecutors,[81] with much greater reason must they implore help for their advocates on earth. It is our confidence in their power, therefore, which makes us rely on their intercession.

Moreover, it being evident that the early Church,

[79] "Ut faciant id quod nos facimus, quia melius et efficacius ipsi facere possunt quam nos, melius illi et nos simul, quam nos soli." — Bellarm. *De Sanctor. Beatif.* l. I, c. 17.

[80] *Gallican Conf.* art. xxiv.

[81] *Apoc.* vi.

even in the East, ever believed in the Communion of Saints in the sense above explained, it does not appear why this doctrine consecrated by Fathers, Doctors, and martyrs the world over, should be styled merely a "Romish doctrine . . . a fond thing, vainly invented . . . and repugnant to the word of God."[82] It would prove most enlightening to be informed, with the proofs, as to who invented it, and just where and how this "fond thing" came into existence. If it is a *res futilis,* as the original text has, then we must confess that its futility was so subtle as to ensnare the keen minds of such men as Origen, St. Basil, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine — men whose mental equals have not often appeared in the history of the world. A supercilious sense of fancied intellectual superiority might possibly sneer at the humble, *habe in mente, quia scimus te in Christo,* of the simple Christian, as he knelt on the cold earth of the Catacombs beside the mortal remains of a loved one. What will he answer to the valiant champion of the faith who thus addresses the erratic Vigilantius in the fourth century?

"You tell us that while we live we may pray for one another, but that after death it is useless to expect that our prayers will be heard: especially since the martyrs were unable to obtain the vengeance which they implored on their executioners (Apoc. vi, 10). If the Apostles and martyrs while in the body can pray for others, when they should be still solicitous for themselves, how much greater will not their power be after having achieved their crowns, their victories, and their triumphs? One man, Moses, obtains pardon of God for six hundred thousand armed men.[83]

[82] *Ang. Conf.* art. xxii. [83] *Exod.* xxxii, 30, seq.

Stephen, imitating his Lord, and himself the protomartyr in Christ, asks pardon for his tormentors.[84] After these holy men have begun to reign with Christ, will their power be less? The Apostle Paul glories that two hundred and seventy-six souls on board the ship have been given to him:[85] will he be unable to utter a prayer for those who throughout the world have believed in his preaching? Shall Vigilantius, a living dog, be of more worth than that dead lion?"[86]

It might perhaps be noted that Vigilantius had at least a semblance of authority for his denials, since, as St. Jerome adds, this heretic relied on the Fourth book of Esdra[87] for his statement — a book which every one knows is apocryphal. Just what particular authority, true or false, inspired the drastic condemnation mentioned in the Thirty-nine Articles does not appear evident.

As regards the question whether the saints pray for any particular individual, or in general for all men, or simply for all the faithful, it is to be noted that here there is a distinction between intercession as seen in the Old Testament, and that which prevails in the New Dispensation.

Since, as mentioned above, it is generally held that the saints behold in the Divine Word our prayers and petitions, it is manifest that before the death of Christ the patriarchs, prophets, and holy persons in general who had departed this life, were not in this way cognizant of things here below, since they were still de-

[84] *Acts* vii, 59.
[85] *Acts* xxvii, 37.
[86] *Cont. Vigilant.*, n. 6.— *P. L.* xxiii, 359–60.
[87] IV *Esdra*, vii, 36–44. Here there is mention of the uselessness of praying for the sinner after the day of judgment. Vigilantius appears to have used this apocryphal work, and even then he misinterpreted it.

barred from the Beatific Vision. This was the reason, as writers hold, why under the Old Law it was not customary for the Jews to say: Saint Abraham, pray for me. But they simply prayed in virtue of the merits of those holy persons, trusting to God to have mercy on them through the remembrance of His servants who had gone before.

In the various instances, therefore, where it is recorded that the saints at that time interceded for their earthly clients, it must be remembered that it was by a special intervention and revelation of God that they understood the needs of these suppliants. Otherwise, they prayed in a general way, as Jeremias, who "prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city." [88]

Under the New Law, however, it was understood that the saints were no longer in Limbo but reigning with Christ, as the Redeemer told the thief on the cross, "this day thou shalt be with me in paradise." [89] Thus it became customary to invoke the saints directly, as appears from the many panegyrics left by the early Fathers, from the oldest examples of Christian epigraphy, and from the litanies [90] of the saints which came into use at a later period.

The whole doctrine of invocation rests on this fact that the saints hear and pray not only for the Church and the faithful as a body, but for each one in particular, according as particular petitions are offered up by the individual for himself or for some specified person. This is the principle also upon which rests the devotion to certain Saints — a devotion as old as the Church herself.

[88] II *Mach.* xv, 14.
[89] *Luke* xxiii, 43.
[90] Cf. part ii, chap. vi, *Litanies.*

It is in this sense that the Council of Trent sums up the question and places the definite seal of approbation on prayers to the saints and their intercession. "They who affirm that the saints in heaven do not pray for men, or that it is idolatry to invoke them that they may pray for each individual — such persons assert what is impious." [91]

In the words of Monsabré: "The Church Militant is, with regard to the Church Triumphant, in a condition similar to that of an army fighting on foreign soil far from its own country, where all is order, peace, and prosperity. Does not the army keep its eyes ever turned towards home, whence it looks for help and reinforcements to enable it to bring to a successful finish a severe and difficult war? Does the country lose all interest, wrapped in its own egotism, in the sufferings and toils of its valiant sons, who on a foreign strand are upholding the honor of the flag? Is there not between the army and the nation at home an intimate bond of sympathy, that vents itself in an earnest interchange of prayers and anxieties and good wishes, till the day when the victorious troops marching in triumph in the midst of their fellow-citizens, witness the heart-felt gratitude that was ever with them in all their trials?" [92]

In the sense of Scripture and Tradition and Faith this is the relation that exists between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven.

[91] Sess. xxv, *De Invocat.*
[92] Monsabré, *Conferences,* de 1882, Conf. 60.

CHAPTER IV

EXPIATION — THE CHURCH SUFFERING

Sect. I — The Existence of Purgatory.

E canterò di quel secondo regno,
Ove l'umano spirito si purga,
E di salire al ciel diventa degno,

— *Dante.*[1]

The most pathetic sight in all creation is, without doubt, the tragedy of suffering. It binds together the members of the human race with rivets of steel. With relentless fury it pursues its terrified victims beyond the grave, and there retains its ruthless grasp until the soul returns to the pure, undefiled likeness to its Maker, or is dragged down to endless torments. The wisdom of man, crystallized in the pagan philosophy of old, could find no satisfying solution to the problem, much less effect a lasting remedy.

Mors ultima linea rerum est,

death is the end of all — was to them the synthesis of existence.[2] Only when the Omnipotent God Himself revealed the reason thereof did suffering stand forth to man's gaze as the logical, the legitimate offspring

[1] And of that second region will I sing,
In which the human spirit from sinful blot
Is purged, and for ascent to Heaven prepares.
— *La Divina Commedia, Purgat.* canto I. (Cary's tr.)

[2] Horace, l. I, *ep.* xvi.

of sin. "As by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death: and so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned" [3] — death, with all its preliminary and concomitant forms of suffering.

Suffering was transformed and idealized by Christ, who made it a medium of His redemption of mankind, and "He was wounded for our iniquities . . . and by his bruises we are healed." [4] By His passion and death, touching the very apex of human suffering, He "blotted out the writing that was against us," [5] and made man once more the heir to heaven and a child of God. But this child proved rebellious, even after his rescue from the shadow of perdition. He again fell into sin, and sin entails two consequences.

In the first place, in sin there is a turning away from God. Now, in the state of original justice the soul possessed, among other gifts, a splendor that was the result of the light of reason guiding it in its actions, directing its operations, cleansing and purifying and chastening its rational vision, thus enabling it to proceed with perfect freedom and untrammeled determination in its apprehensions.[6]

Besides this natural light there is a supernatural effulgence in the soul by which in a peculiar manner it reflects the glory of God. By grace the soul is united to Him in bonds of friendship and of love; it is thus made more closely into the image and likeness of the Creator. It bears upon itself the impress of the divine beauty, and is enabled to act in conformity to this light. Through grievous sin, however, the soul turns against the dictates both of reason and of

[3] *Rom.* v, 12.
[4] *Isaias* liii, 5.
[5] *Col.* ii, 14.
[6] *Sum. Theol.* I–II, q. lxxxvi, a. 1.

grace, and follows its own wayward fancies. This aversion to the light, both rational and divine, produces in the soul a sort of darkness and a blot, and this is called the stain.[7] It is the badge of guilt, the sign of enmity to God, and it marks its possessor as a rebel against heaven and heaven's laws. Although the soul be a finite creature its sinful actions still bear the mark of infinitude as regards the offence, since they offend against an infinite God, and we measure the degree of guilt by the dignity of the person outraged. On the other hand, since ordinarily reparation depends for its efficacy upon the dignity and power of the person who offers the reparation, it follows that a finite creature can never hope, through his unassisted efforts, to make adequate compensation for the enormity of his rebellion against infinite dignity. Nay, the collective efforts of the angels and of all created beings together will still be inadequate to liquidate a debt of such gigantic magnitude. Without a divine intervention, therefore, the state of a soul in such a lamentable condition is well-nigh irreparable.

But this stain is not the only effect of sin. There is another consequence equally appalling. The divine government of the universe, including man, rests upon certain irrevocably fixed and eternally positive principles. These principles constitute the Justice of God. All creation is amenable to those eternal standards of justice. Any disturbance of this perennial equilibrium must be followed inexorably by a penalty that will suffice to restore the disturbed condition of the guilty one and of the universal order. "As much as she hath glorified herself, and hath been in delicacies so much torment and sorrow give ye her."[8] Since

[7] Ibid.

[8] *Apoc.* xviii, 7.

this disturbance was caused by man in turning his will away from God and indulging his base appetites against the Will of his Maker, it is necessary that he now turn to God by imposing upon himself, or by suffering from another, that which his will finds difficult to perform.[9] As much as he has glorified himself, so much sorrow must he bear.

The work of the redemption tends to restore the sinner to the friendship of God. It lifts him up from the abyss into which he had fallen, and whence he was of his own power unable to extricate himself. Even then, though, after he has been reinstated in his heritage, there still remains the debt of punishment for sin which must be cancelled by suffering or penance. He must pay the very last farthing.

A striking illustration of the remission of the guilt of sin, with the punishment still to be undergone, is afforded in the case of David. After his crime the king repented, and God accepted his repentance. "And Nathan said to David: The Lord also hath taken away thy sin; . . . nevertheless . . . the child that is born to thee shall surely die. And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died." This in spite of David's repentance, and the fact that "David besought the Lord for the child; and David kept a fast." [10]

This truth is placed in unmistakable light when the Council of Trent decreed that: "If any one says that after the grace of justification a repentant sinner is freed from both guilt and eternal penalty in such a

[9] "And this is without doubt to be looked for, that the debt due for sin must either here by pain or pardon be discharged, or else to our greater grief after our departure required."—Card. Allen, *Souls Departed*, p. 30. Ed. Bridgett, 1901.

[10] II *Kings* xii, 13–8.

way that no temporal pain remains to be paid either in this world or in purgatory before entering heaven: let him be anathema." [11] This decree simply accentuates the necessity of penance for all sin, light or grave — a necessity that does not cease with the death of the body, unless it be cancelled by complete atonement of some kind.

Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all.[12]

The guilt has been blotted out, indeed, but satisfaction must be rendered for the disorder brought in. In going the way of sin the will wandered from God: that will must now be led back through the painful maze of suffering. Thus shall all justice be satisfied.[13]

This satisfactory penance may be accomplished in various ways. Voluntary privations are most efficacious in effecting this return. Punishments inflicted by God and accepted in a spirit of docility become excellent works of penance and satisfaction. Deeds of alms and charity offered for this end, help to attain the same result. Penance thus becomes also an integral part of the great sacrament of remission. All the works of mercy assist wonderfully in restoring the

[11] "Si quis post justificationis gratiam cuilibet peccatori poenitenti ita culpam remitti, et reatum poenae aeternae deleri dixerit, ut nullus remaneat reatus poenae temporalis exsolvendae vel in hoc saeculo, vel in futuro in purgatorio, antequam ad regna coelorum aditus patere possit: anathema sit."— *Sess.* vi, *can.* xxx.

[12] Longfellow.

[13] The Council of Trent made this clear when it warned priests to remember that, "the satisfaction which they impose (in confession) is not to be simply a pledge of new life, and a remedy for the sinner's weakness: but also a punishment (*vindicta*) and a chastisement." *Sess.* xiv, cap. viii.

soul to its former plane of entire conformity to the divine principles of justice. The supreme act which, the Church teaches, cancels all debt, is martyrdom, for this is the highest testimonial of homage that a soul is here capable of rendering to its God.

Thus far we have seen the return of the soul to God through the merits of Christ as the redeeming feature, and its own sufferings and good works as a personal recompense for the disorder introduced into the soul itself as well as in the order of divine Justice. It is possible, therefore, for a soul to be in a state of friendship with its Creator and still have a debt to pay to His Justice. What if the soul, however, should pass from this life with the guilt of sin washed away, and still under the pressure of unpaid spiritual debts? Will it immediately enter into the joy of its Lord, before Whom the angels are not pure? before Whom nothing defiled, even with a temporal debt, is allowed to stand? [14] Hardly.

It will not do to say, with the Westminster Confession, that, "The souls of the righteous being then (i.e., at death) made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory." [15] For aside from the fact that this statement rests upon the now exploded theory of the all-sufficiency of faith alone as a means of justification, such a solution of the problem might, for the sake of argument, and if proven, account for the purification of the soul from all guilt or stain. It would scarcely explain the atonement necessitated by

[14] There shall not enter into it anything defiled. *Apoc.* xxi, 27.— Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. *Matt.* v, 8.

[15] Westm. *Conf.* Chap. xxxii (*Of the State of Man after death*), n. 1. Schaff, *Creeds*, III, 670.

every sin; on the contrary, it would tend to encourage a delay in repentance, or even to prove an incentive to rather than a deterrent from further sin. Such a theory, however, is untenable any way it may be considered, as it is opposed to Scripture, tradition, and the very nature of sin. Moreover, some Anglicans, even, reject its assumption, which is a denial of any intermediate state between heaven and hell — a state which they admit in a certain way.[16]

The Christian idea of an intermediary state seems to have been a part of the heritage handed down from the Old Dispensation.[17] "The revelation of it," observes Luckock, "seems to have been vouchsafed [to the Hebrews] gradually from the beginning. We are able to trace it running like a thread through the pages of the Old Testament, hardly noticeable at first, but becoming clearer and clearer, till at last it stands out conspicuous in its distinctness." [18]

Although the all-absorbing thought prominent be-

[16] See Vawdrey, *The meaning of the doct. of the Com. of Sts.*, p. 67.— Luckock, *The Intermediate State*, 5th ed., p. 14–27.

[17] The Jews believed in a middle state, as is evident from many sources, and from the word שאול — *sheol*. It would seem that the translators of the English Bible sometimes fell into inconsistencies in trying to avoid the use of *sheol* as indicating a middle state. "Hence in those English versions of the Scripture which were severally made in the years 1562, 1577, and 1579, whenever the Hebrew שאול *sheol*, the Greek ἅδης of the Septuagint, and the 'Infernus' of the Latin Vulgate, seemed to favor the doctrine of Purgatory, these words were rendered into English by '*grave*,' without caring in the least about the violent distortion which was inflicted on the passage, or the absurdity it was condemned to assume by such a translation. Thus it is that in the Protestant Bible Jacob is made to say: 'I will go down into the *grave* unto my son,'— as if the patriarch imagined that his son Joseph had been buried in a *grave*, when on the contrary he had just before exclaimed: 'It is my son's coat; an evil wild beast hath *eaten* him, a beast hath *devoured* Joseph.'"— Rock, *Hierurgia*, t. ii, p. 49. Ed. 1892.

[18] Op. c. p. 27.

fore the mind of the primitive Christian was Christ, the Redeemer, other doctrines contained in the Deposit of Faith were gradually assuming definite shape and proportion. The writers of the apostolic and the sub-apostolic age frequently quote the books of the Old Testament. There was a certain connection between the Old and the New. The latter was the fulfillment of the hopes, the yearnings, and the promises to the fathers. Now, just as Christ, the Redeemer who had suffered, was uppermost in the minds of the faithful, so the burden of the former covenant was the Messia — His advent, His power, His sufferings, and His final triumph. All the work, the study, the prayer of the preceding ages was to be a preparation for the worthy reception of the Holy One. Here and there, however, we find mention made of the lot of the pilgrims not only while still on their journey heavenward, but after their departure hence.

In the early periods there is but little knowledge definitely displayed of the other world. It is an unknown bourne — "a land that is dark and covered with the mist of death: a land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth." [19]

As the prophets with clarified vision begin to unfold the secrets and the wishes of the Almighty, the idea of a grand awakening, a resurrection to glory, becomes a fixed truth grasped by all alike, and a great solace to the people in the midst of their trials. The glowing description which Ezechiel presents of the dead bones rising from their graves — "and the spirit came into them, and they lived: and they stood upon

[19] *Job* x, 21–2.

their feet, an exceeding great army"[20] — places beyond a doubt the firm conviction of a future resurrection[21] and, by inference, a belief in an intermediate state.

This belief grew among the Jews until in the second century before the coming of Christ, the idea stands out in luminous but simple grandeur. We shall not here enter into a discussion as to the merits of the Books of the Machabees. The Church has accepted them as an integral part of the Canon of Scripture, and that fact alone suffices for our present purpose.[22] It may be observed in passing that, in a treatise which he wrote to St. Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, St. Augustine speaks of set purpose of prayers for the dead, and quotes the famous passage from the second book of the Machabees in support of his contention.[23] He adds, moreover, that even if no mention had been made in the Old Testament, the authority of the Church sanctions this practice, and thus presupposes a place of purgation.[24]

The classic authority as to the belief of the Jews, therefore, is to be found in the above mentioned second book of Machabees.

Judas Machabeus had defeated Georgias, the governor of Idumea. The Jewish soldiers purified them-

[20] *Ezech.* xxxvii, 10.

[21] Luckock develops this idea in chap. iii, op. cit.

[22] *Conc. Trid.* Sess. IV, *Decret. de Canon. Script.*

[23] Origen also quotes II *Mach.* 15, to prove that Saints pray for us. *De Orat.* xi, 1.

[24] *De Cura pro Mort.* c. I. *P. L.* xl, 593. After quoting II *Mach.*, he adds: "Si nusquam in Scripturis veteribus omnino legeretur, non parva est universae Ecclesiae, quae in hac consuetudine claret auctoritas, ubi in precibus sacerdotis quae Domino Deo ad ejus altare funduntur, locum suum habet etiam commemoratio mortuorum."

selves afterwards, according to their rites.[25] "And the day following Judas came with his company, to take away the bodies of them that were slain, and to bury them with their kinsmen, in the sepulchres of their fathers. And they found under the coats of the slain some of the donaries of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbiddeth to the Jews;[26] so that all plainly saw, that for this cause they were slain. . . . And so betaking themselves to prayers, they besought Him [the Lord], that the sin which had been committed might be forgotten. . . . And making a gathering he [Judas] sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. . . . And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them."[27]

It would be, indeed, difficult to find a more explicit pronouncement of faith in an intermediate or purgatorial state than the above. Judas evidently believed that the sins of his soldiers in taking the idols against the law would be remitted in a future state by God, considering that they had fallen while fighting the battles of the Lord, and in defence of their religion. Moreover, the valiant Judas appears to voice the general belief, when without any sign of surprise on the part of his comrades or the people he, as a matter of course, sends to Jerusalem to have sacrifices offered for the dead, while the soldiers all betake themselves

[25] II *Mach.* xii, 38.

[26] "Their graven things thou shalt burn with fire: thou shalt not covet the silver and gold of which they are made, neither shalt thou take to thee anything thereof, lest thou offend, because it is an abomination to the Lord thy God." *Deut.* vii, 25.

[27] II *Mach.* xii, 39, seq.

to prayer for the same purpose. The naturalness of the whole proceeding indicates plainly that this belief was not a new or a recent one, but the customary, traditional use of the Synagogue.

Many beliefs of the Jewish people therefore were retained under the Gospel. Although under the Law God appeared very often as a just avenger of the wicked, and in the New Covenant He stands forth pre-eminently as a loving Father, still, the idea of the divine justice was firmly intrenched in the minds of the faithful. Christ Himself had inculcated this principle when He told the people that, not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall be saved. "Thou shalt not go out hence, until thou pay the very last mite." [28] This severe speech showed them conclusively that the very slightest fault was to be atoned for; as St. Augustine expresses it: "God spareth neither the just nor the unjust: chastising the one as his child, the other as a wicked person." [29] Nay, "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment." [30]

Now, this last passage cannot possibly be understood as susceptible of verification in the case of a person dying with lesser sins in his soul, unless we admit some state where that soul shall be detained until expiation shall have purged away every vestige of debt. Nor is it fair to conclude from this that the soul must necessarily remain in prison until the general judgment. The sense of the passage is fully intelligible when we understand it to mean that on the day of reckoning every deed shall be brought forth in

[28] *Luke* xii, 59.
[29] *Cont. Faust.* l. xxii, c. 20.
[30] *Matt.* xii, 36.

review at the dread tribunal, and an account rendered for each and every fault. "The books were opened . . . and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works." [31] An intermediate state of penitential discipline will prepare the soul for reception into the blessed abode where, "there shall not enter . . . anything defiled." [32]

On the other hand, take away such a penitential probation, and it will be difficult, not to say impossible, to account for the manner in which such souls dying with the mark of venial faults impressed upon them, or with the penalty for previous sins still unatoned for, can hope to enter,

> Into the heaven, that is unbodied light,
> Light intellectual, replete with love.[33]

The reformers easily vaulted over this difficulty by striking out the distinction — founded upon revelation and reason — between venial and mortal sin. For reason as well as faith teaches that, "the servant who knew the will of his lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes." [34]

The very nature of sin and guilt, therefore, necessitates that there be a certain scale of punishment in conformity with the seriousness or less grievous nature of human transgressions. We shall not dispute about the name, Purgatory, provided it be admitted that there is such a third state.

[31] *Apoc.* xx, 12.
[32] *Apoc.* xxi, 27.
[33] *Div. Com. Paradiso,* canto xxx.
[34] *Luke* xii, 47–8.

With regard to the souls who died before Christ offered up His life upon the cross, we know with certainty that they were in a state different from heaven and hell. For we are expressly told by St. Peter that Christ, "being put to death indeed in the flesh, but enlivened in the spirit . . . preached to those spirits that were in prison." [35] Here it is plain from the context that the "prison" was neither heaven nor hell, but some intermediate state wherein were waiting the souls of the just long since departed.

True, the New Testament does not seem to make explicit mention of Purgatory. The general tone however of the Gospel teaching, together with the sense of Scripture as always understood by the Fathers, and explained by the Church, leaves not the least doubt that belief in a place of temporary punishment after death was clear to the minds of the faithful from the beginning.

In the well-known passage of St. Matthew, Christ is thought by some to allude to this state. The Savior is confuting the Pharisees, who accused Him of working miracles by the power of the devil. Referring to this blasphemous charge, He indicates its heinousness by saying: 'Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world, nor in the world to come." [36] This emphatic expression may be accepted as the clinching force of the argument which our Lord uses. This terrific arraignment of the sinner is taken by some to indicate final impenitence, but

[35] I *Peter* iii, 18–9.

[36] *Matt.* xii, 32. St. Luke makes this more emphatic by saying that he "shall be guilty of an everlasting sin," iii, 29.

by many it is accepted in this sense, that it condemns the horrid blasphemy of the Pharisees who not only resisted the truth of Christ's teaching and divinity, but openly attributed His power of miracles to the work of the enemy of mankind, Beelzebub.[37] In either acceptation of the meaning we find a reference to some kind of a future state in which the possibility of remitting faults is assumed.

St. Augustine accepts without question this idea of a future state of limited punishment as shadowed forth in these very words. "For it could not truly be said," he observes, "of some persons, that they would not be forgiven either in this world or in the world to come, unless there were some who would be forgiven in a future state, though not in the present." [38]

St. Gregory also sees in these words a reference to Purgatory. He is speaking of the necessity of working while there is time, and quotes a number of proofs from Scripture in support of his meaning.[39] He then adds: "From these passages it is evident that just as a person goes forth hence, so will he stand in judgment. Yet it must be admitted that there is a purgatorial fire awaiting certain small faults, since divine Truth says: (*here he quotes the passage referred to*). In other words, we are given to understand that certain faults will be remitted in this world, and others in the next." [40]

What is certain is this, that the Redeemer hereby shows the utter impossibility of such a sinner as he

[37] Cf. Maas, *Com. in St. Matt.* h. l.

[38] *De Civ. Dei*, xxi, c. 24. *P. L.* xli, 738.

[39] He quotes *John* xii, 35; *Isaias* xlix, 8; II *Cor.* vi, 2; *Eccles* ix, 10; *Ps.* cxvii.

[40] *Dialog.* iv, 39. *P. L.* lxxvii, 396. Card. Bellarminus explains the passage in this sense; "else," he remarks, "Christ would have used a meaningless expression." *De Purg.* l. i, c. 4.

mentions reaching eternal happiness — a contingent not due to a lack of the grace of God, since God wishes all men to be saved, but rather the result of a will so hardened as to use its very freedom to scoff at the only One who can save it from perdition. Hence, Christ does not say that he cannot, but that he will not be forgiven, by reason of his obstinacy.

If we view this text in conjunction with other passages of a similar nature it will appear even more clear that there must be a place of temporal punishment after death.

One of the most prominent features of the Savior's teaching is the absolute necessity of penance. For sins committed after baptism there is no other way to regain the friendship of God. "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish," [41] was the most sweeping denunciation uttered by Christ. Penance is understood to mean not merely a change of heart, or a vain regret, but rather a deep sorrow accompanied by a disciplinary and punitive attitude towards oneself. It entails, in one word, some kind of suffering. The external symbols of this suffering, of body or of mind, may be various according to custom, law, or inclination. When Job accuses himself of having spoken unwisely of the Lord,[42] he repents, and to show that this is true repentance, "I reprehend myself," he says, "and do penance in dust and ashes." [43]

It is evident therefore that this idea of penance is not a mere effect of the new teaching of Christ; it is an essential element of the very nature of penance itself [44] — an element understood at all times and by all

[41] *Luke* xiii, 3.
[42] *Job* xlii, 3.
[43] L. c. Vers. 6.
[44] This was the idea uppermost in the minds of the Fathers

classes of men, until the sixteenth century, when a coterie of pseudo-reformers entered the maelstrom of contradictions, trusting to faith alone as a panacea against all ills.

In the above mentioned text from St. Matthew, Christ refers to sins which may be forgiven in this world — always in virtue of penance without which all men will perish alike. If penance therefore be the universal and necessary remedy, it is not clear just how the soul will be "made perfect in holiness" at the hour of death, if it has not previously passed through the crucible of suffering, in other words, of penance. This difficulty, however, disappears once an intermediate state of probation is admitted.

That St. Augustine takes this view, in spite of the fact that he is sometimes accused of being neutral on this point,[45] appears from his remarks in "The City of God," as well as from his opinion quoted above. In this notable monument of a noble genius and splendid mind the great Doctor is speaking of those who denied the eternity of punishment. He quotes Virgil to the effect that the pagans denied all but purgatorial or merely purifying sufferings after death. He remarks that even in this life there are certain purgatorial pains to be endured. The significant words about Purgatory then follow: "Some persons suffer temporary pains in this life only; other persons, after death; while some suffer both before and after death, but always before

in speaking of penance. "Take heed to thyself that, in proportion to the fault, thou admit also the restoration of the remedy." St. Basil.—"As we have sinned greatly, let us weep greatly; for a deep wound there must not be wanting diligent and long tending, the repentance must not fall short of the offence." St. Cyprian. Quoted by Newman, *Development*, part ii, ch. 9.

[45] Cf. Luckock, *Intermed. State*, ch. viii.

that last most terrible judgment." [46] This can be understood in but one sense, i. e., that there is after death a probationary state of discipline.

The same idea is brought forth by this holy Father in other places of the same work. In speaking, for example, of those who die in childhood, and after baptism, he says that they are "ushered immediately into the kingdom of Christ, and escape not only eternal pains, but even those purifying pains after death." [47] In the same chapter he warns sinners to the effect that after death they need hope for no mere purgatorial or purifying punishment except before the great judgment.[48] Such modes of expression surely indicate a belief in some sort of transient suffering beyond the grave.

There are several other passages in Holy Writ which are sometimes alleged as pointing to a state of future purification. Chief among these are the words of the prophet Malachy, and those of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

The prophet looking into the future with the vision of a seer, beholds the coming Messia. "Behold, he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts: and who shall be able to think of the day of his coming? And who shall stand to see him? for he is like a refining fire, and like the fuller's herb: and he shall sit refining and cleansing the silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and shall refine them as gold and silver." [49]

[46] *De Civ. Dei*, xxi, 13.

[47] "Translata a potestate tenebrarum in regnum Christi, non solum poenis non praeparetur aeternis, sed ne ulla quidem post mortem purgatoria tormenta patiatur." Op. c. C. 16.

[48] "Purgatorias autem poenas nullas futuras opinetur, nisi ante illud ultimum tremendumque judicium." L. c.

[49] *Malachy* iii, 1–3. Cf. Origen hom. xii *in Jerem*, about gold, silver, etc.

In the celebrated passage of St. Paul the apostle is speaking of those who have built on the true foundation which is Christ, that is, faith in Christ, and actuated by charity.[50] He compares the various buildings that are erected on this foundation. Some are perfect — gold, silver, precious stones. These shall stand as monuments of virtue and perfection. Others have mixed in many imperfections in their building. The fire of divine judgment shall test every man's work. The gold shall come out brighter than before. The hay, wood, and stubble shall be destroyed, but since the Christian has built upon the right foundation, his work, indeed, that is, his imperfect work, shall be destroyed, but he himself shall be preserved by fire. This evidently does not refer to the fire of hell, out of which there is no redemption, but to some other kind of purification.

In both these passages there is mention of a cleansing fire, which may be understood of trials and tribulation that effect in man a detachment from earthly dross and sin, and quicken his spirit for heaven. Or again, it may be taken in the sense of a purgatorial ordeal in the next life, and before the last judgment. St. Augustine admits that it may be accepted in this latter sense, though he declares that it is not necessarily conclusive of purgatory.[51]

[50] I *Cor.* iii, 10–15. The Council of Florence uses both these passages and the one from *Mark* iii, 29, in confirmation of the existence of Purgatory.

[51] "Post istius sane corporis mortem, donec ad illum veniatur, qui post resurrectionem corporum futurus est damnationis et resurrectionis ultimus dies, si hoc temporis intervallo spiritus defunctorum hujusmodi ignem dicuntur perpeti . . . non redarguo, quia forsitan verum est." *De Civ. Dei*, xx, c. 26. Cf. Also St. Greg. *Dial.* iv, 39. In regard to the prophecy of Malachy, St. Augustine adds: "Ex his quae dicta sunt, videtur evidentius apparere in illo judicio quasdam quorumdam purgatorias poenas futuras." L. c. c. 25.

Cardinal Bellarmine uses the passage from St. Paul as an argument for the existence of purgatory. He elucidates the idea by the figure of two men who have each erected a building; one man used incombustible materials, whilst the other introduced wood and other inflammable substances in his building. In case of a fire, the former will remain unharmed in his fireproof structure; whilst the latter will witness the destruction of his work; he himself, however, will escape, though only through the scorching flame. So, adds this writer, will it be with two persons dying, one in a state of sanctity, the other with venial offences charged up against him. The foundation being solid, both will be saved, though in different ways.[52]

While the idea of penance held a prominent position in the early economy of the Church — a prominence reflected in the extreme severity of the canonical discipline of the times — it does not appear that the subject of purgatory came in for particularly definite treatment in the first century. Indeed, judging from the fervor and glow of primitive faith it can scarcely be a just matter for surprise that the doctrine of future purgatorial probation should be reserved for later discussion and definite exposition. Besides, the writings of that period have to deal chiefly with other matters concerning the basic principles of Christ's redemption, while such subjects as Indulgences, Purgatory, and other kindred tenets of belief came into their own under the influence of gradual development and legitimate connection with the body of doctrine.

But it would be very erroneous to believe that since no definite decrees of the Church appeared at that period on the matter in hand, therefore the belief itself

[52] *De Purg.* l. i, c. 5.

did not exist. Such a view is contrary both to history as well as to the fundamental truths professed by the early faithful.

As has been observed in a previous chapter, many points of doctrine were implicitly believed and defended in a general sense; whereas succeeding ages with the concomitant and sporadic evil growth of heresy necessitated explicit affirmation or denial; as was the case, for example, with Nestorianism, and the Monophysites.

The earliest references that we possess in regard to a punitive future state for lighter faults allude in a casual way, without proofs, to the general belief. They take as a matter of common acceptance the truth to which they simply allude.

The necessity of penitential discipline for sins committed after baptism is noticed also by Clement of Alexandria (d. 215). In his "Miscellanies" he is speaking of baptism and the remission of sin. He says: "It must be borne in mind that they are punished who fall into sin after baptism. For the sins committed before are remitted (*in baptism*): those committed afterwards, are punished."[53] He does not, however, infer that at death the soul will "be made perfect in holiness," unless it has previously been cleansed by suffering. Granted that this is impossible on earth, it will not be unfair to conclude that it must be accomplished hereafter.

In the year 252, St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, and afterwards the first martyred bishop of that city, wrote to Antonianus, in Rome.[54] The latter was worried at the generosity of the confessors in prison who

[53] *Strom.* iv, c. 24. *P. G.* viii, 1364.
[54] St. Cyprian died in 258.

gave the now famous *libelli* to many Christians who had fallen and afterwards repented, and who thought by means of these recommendations from the future martyrs to regain their former standing in the Church So great was their number that Antonianus complained of the practice as tending to weaken discipline and to encourage apostasy. St. Cyprian reassures him that in spite of this the vigor of the Church will still continue to produce great fruits of sanctity and noble examples of martyrdom. The saint then adds these words: "It is one thing to be cast into prison to there remain until the last farthing has been paid; another, to immediately receive the reward of faith and virtue (I Cor. iii); one thing to be cleansed from sin by long protracted sufferings, and thereby purged by slow fire, another, to wipe out all sin by martyrdom; one thing, finally, to await the Lord's sentence at the day of judgment, another, to be at once crowned by the Lord." [55]

Here again, at least indirectly, there is an apparent reference to some kind of future penalty. Even taking the expression, "purged by slow fire," as referring to trials and sufferings, the comparison is evidently between those who by martyrdom wipe out at once all guilt and penalty, and those who eventually will be saved, but only by a long, painful process, to be terminated for some by the "Lord's sentence at the day of judgment."

Before this time Origen has a reference to some

[55] "Aliud est ad veniam stare, aliud ad gloriam pervenire, aliud missum in carcerem non exire inde donec solvat novissimum quadrantem, aliud statim fidei et virtutis accipere mercedem, aliud pro peccatis longo dolore cruciatum emundari et purgari diu igne, aliud peccata omnia passione purgare, aliud denique pendere in diem judicii, ad sententiam Domini, aliud statim a Domino coronari." *Ep. ad Antonianum*, n. 20. *P. L.* iii, 810–11.

place of punishment after death. He distinguishes between sins committed with full and deliberate malice, and those which are the result of ignorance. He does not, however, exempt even these last from some sort of purgatorial purification. He explains his opinion by saying: "And there are other sins. If we have committed these through ignorance, there is, I believe, a place set aside for us by God, where we shall be forced to remain for a time: this, in the supposition that we are not stained by those sins which were the result of free will," evidently meaning serious or mortal sins.[56]

Among the various good works beneficial and helpful to the souls in purgatory must be mentioned indulgences. These extra-sacramental remissions of the temporal punishment due to sin are sometimes made applicable to the departed. This may be done, and often is done, by the authority of the Church, who is the guardian and the administratrix of the divine treasury of the superabundant merits of Christ and the Saints. An indulgence may be applied to the dead through the intention of the living who gain this privilege, and who direct it towards the souls in purgatory. This application and its value naturally depend upon the will of God; hence it is called a suffrage, through which the Church begs of God to lessen or entirely to obliterate the sufferings of the souls for whom this suffrage is offered. It should be observed, with St. Thomas, that these suffrages do not increase what is called the essential happiness of the saved, but simply augment their accidental glory, by assisting them to discharge their temporal obligations.[57]

[56] *Hom.* xxviii *in Num. P. G.* xii, 803.
[57] *Quodlib.* viii, q. v, a. 9.— See also, *Quodlib.* ii, q. vii, a. 14..

As regards the exact nature of the pains of purgatory several opinions have been proposed. The Western, and some of the Eastern Fathers, have held that this suffering was a kind of fire.[58] This appears from the *ignis* — fire — which they frequently mention, as is seen in the passages quoted above from these sources. The Western Church always held this: the Greeks later on rejected the idea of fire, while still admitting the purgatorial nature of the suffering. They affirm there is nothing in Scripture to warrant belief in a purgatorial fire, as such.[59]

In the profession of faith drawn up in the Council of Florence (1439), and signed by the Greek Bishops also present, we read that: "Those souls who, after having contracted the stain of sin, have atoned either in this life or in the next, are immediately received into heaven, and there behold the clarified vision of God, as He is, each one in a different degree according to his merits."[60] True, Constantinople afterwards rejected some of the work approved by the Greeks in this Council, but when men of the stamp of Bessarion agreed to the proceedings, it shows that some of the better minds of the Orient appreciated the truth handed down, "according to the teaching of the Church," as the decree reads.[61]

Although, as noted above, there is but little literature extant of the first two centuries treating explicitly

[58] Cf. also *Cat. of Council of Trent*, part i, ch. 5.

[59] Confession adopted by Græco-Russian Synod at Jassy, 1643. Q. 66. Schaff, *Creeds*, t. ii, p. 345.

[60] "Illas (souls) quae post contractam peccati maculam, vel in suis corporibus, vel eisdem exutae corporibus . . . sunt purgatae, in coelum mox recipi, et intueri clare ipsum Deum trinum et unum, sicuti est, pro meritorum tamen diversitate alium alio perfectius." Labbe, t. xvi, col. 515.

[61] L. c.

of Purgatory, there is sufficient evidence in the belief and the practices and customs of both Church and faithful to prove beyond doubt that our forefathers in the faith, even in that remote period, held fast to the doctrine that just as the prayers of the good could assist them in this life, so were they efficacious beyond the grave. As death was but a sleep, a transition, it by no means severed the spiritual union that gathered together into the mystical Body of Christ the members of the Church in heaven, on earth, and in purgatory.

When we come to the evidence that is to be found in abundance in the living customs of the Church, we shall behold a vast stream of testimony sufficient to clear aside all the innovations and denials of later times.

CHAPTER IV

EXPIATION — THE CHURCH SUFFERING

Sect. II — Suffrages for the Dead.

Chè qui per quei di là molto s'avanza.
— *Dante.*[1]

The peculiar state in which the souls in Purgatory are situated precludes the power of merit on their part. For merit properly speaking belongs to the state of the wayfarer. It entails a reward, a "crown of justice," which is given to a person for his good deeds performed in coöperation with divine grace. When a person, however, ceases to be a wayfarer in life he is said to have arrived at the end of his journey, and his will becomes irrevocably fixed in good or in evil, accordingly as he has in life merited reward or punishment.

St. Thomas, with the Fathers and theologians, teaches that in hell the lost soul cannot merit either a recompense or even greater punishment. For, says the holy Doctor, although the damned continually blaspheme God, still this does not merit for them greater chastisement, since it is a part of the punishment they there endure. In the same way, he observes, in the blessed there is no question of merit, since their acts

[1] . . . For here
By means of those below much profit comes.
— *Purg.* c. iii.

of love for God are a part of their happiness.[2] This same principle may be applied to the souls who are still in their prison of suffering. The very fact of their existence in Purgatory is a proof that they have merited life eternal, but are temporarily detained for further discipline until the last farthing of penalty has been paid. They belong to the company of the blessed but are still for a time prevented the full fruition of God. They are impeccable and also beyond the possibility of meriting. For them the "night has come when no man can work,"[3] and in them has been fulfilled, "what things a man shall sow, those also shall be reap."[4]

In spite of this unhappy state these holy souls are the friends of God, they are still members of the Church founded by Christ, and as such they retain their right to share in the good works of that Church and of all its children. They are powerless, as said above, to merit for themselves, but their union with the Church Militant entitles them to participate in the good done by others who are still on earth, as David sang, "I am a partaker with all them that fear thee."[5]

The very nature of that union mentioned above necessitates a solidarity, binding together all the members of Christ's mystical body. The effect of the Savior's sufferings and death was the salvation of man: a salvation to be enjoyed not for a time only but extending beyond the grave and embracing all those who come under its mysterious influence, in heaven, on earth, and in Purgatory. The spirit of mutual intercession among the faithful on earth as reflected throughout the New Testament accompanied those who had fin-

[2] II–II, q. xiii, a. 4.
[3] *John* ix, 4.
[4] *Gal.* vi, 8.
[5] *Ps.* cxviii, 63.

ished their earthly career and were entered upon a new phase of existence. In spite of the sporadic denials of this doctrine by heretics at various times, the fact remains that, once admitted the true idea of the union of Christ and His Church — an idea mentioned frequently by the Redeemer Himself and continually preached by the Apostles and their successors — it becomes morally impossible to reject the truth that the faithful on earth can by their prayers assist those in need of relief, even though the latter be materially separated from the former. For such a rejection would stand out boldly as a misinterpretation and a misunderstanding of the essential doctrines of the Faith. It would also without proof or evidence of any sort seek to overthrow at one blow the universal teaching and belief of all Christians for fifteen hundred years, and of the great majority of all time.

That a number of Protestant sects in the last few centuries have been pleased to refuse adherence to so venerable a doctrine, does not in the least affect the integrity of our belief. In St. Jerome's time the world awoke to find itself Arian, to use that holy Doctor's words: but the true faith triumphed. In the sixteenth century Northern Europe awoke to find itself Protestant: but the Faith still flourished, and the Church kept on saving souls, and gave to heaven, "out of her love for God, a vast army of martyrs"[6] and saints. Nay, and she went on praying for the souls of her departed brethren who might stand in need of help; and instead of abandoning them at the grave, she followed them into the great Beyond with Masses and prayers

[6] "Ecclesia omni in loco ob eam quam habet erga Deum, dilectionem, multitudinem martyrum in omni tempore praemittit ad Patrem."— S. Irenæus, *Adv. Haers.*, l. iv, c. 33. *P. G.* vii, 1078.

and the good works of her other children. Nay, more. After the fury of the late agitation had begun to abate we find the more enlightened and sincere Protestants begin to delve into the subject with earnest search, and finally admit, if not all, at least a part of the ancient doctrine, namely, that prayers for the dead are helpful for the dead.[7] It is devoutly hoped that their investigation will eventually be crowned with the possession of the truth on this subject. For this ever formed for our common ancestors in the faith a fundamental and perennial source of happiness and actual joy,[8] thus differentiating them from the pagans, who have not hope.

The Catholic position on this subject has often been explained in the Councils of the Church. When the Waldenses were to be received back into the fold they accepted a profession of faith ordered by Pope Innocent III (1210).[9] So also the Greeks later on, in the second General Council of Lyons, in 1274.[10] Finally the Council of Trent summing up the teaching and traditions of many centuries declared that: "The Catholic Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, relying on Holy Writ and the ancient traditions of the Fathers, has taught in the sacred councils, as also lately in this Ecumenical Synod, that Purgatory exists, and that the

[7] Luckock, *Intermediate State*, ed. c., p. 216.—Vawdrey, *Com. of Saints*, p. 74, admits it may be right.—Gilbert, Methodist, *The Hereafter and Heaven*, ch. viii, and authors quoted. This latter work created considerable comment at the time of its publication. Cf. *Lit. Digest*, Apr. 20, and May 11, 1907.

[8] St. Gregory Nazianzen, in the funeral oration over his father, says that for the good there is no terror in death. "Thus they who have preceded us cause no sorrow in our hearts: yea, they are to us a cause of rejoicing."—*Orat.* xviii, n. 3. *Fun. in patrem.*

[9] Denzinger, *Enchirid.*, n. 373.

[10] Ibid. n. 387. For Council of Flor. see Labbè, t. xvi, 515.

souls therein detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, and above all, by the acceptable Sacrifice of the Altar." [11]

That the early Church actually held and practised this doctrine is so easy of proof that it seems almost superfluous to present even a fraction of the voluminous testimony to be found in Tradition. We shall endeavor, however, to place before the reader the chief and most salient features of that tradition.

The fact of Judas Machabeus, related in II Machabees, considered even historically, points to a custom which must be admitted, at least during the period when that champion of the people of God flourished.[12] This custom was transmitted to the Church which succeeded the Synagogue. Thus from the earliest ages of Christianity we find the practice of praying for the dead. True, as Kirsch remarks, the nature of the Christian writings of the first century "is such as to afford no occasion for alluding to the departed." [13] In fact, during that period mention of the relations of the departed to the faithful on earth is confined chiefly to the saints in heaven, and above all to the martyrs, with regard to the faithful. As we shall see in speaking of martyrdom, the martyrs were always viewed with a reverential awe by the rest of the faithful; their power with God was considered as a thing apart, bear-

[11] Sess. xxv, *Decretum de Purg.*— The third Council of Carthage (397), can. xxix, states that when Mass is said and a funeral is held, the faithful present who have broken their fast, should simply pray, and not receive Holy Communion, thus pointing to the custom of praying at funerals, ostensibly, for the relief of the departed.— Mansi, t. iii, 885.

[12] The manner in which this fact is described in II *Mach.* xii, points indeed to a long standing and accepted custom.

[13] Kirsch, *Communion of Saints in the Ancient Church.* McKee's tr., p. 39.

ing no comparison with that of the simple confessor. Hence, by reason of the vast number of these champions of the common faith, it would seem that prayers for the ordinary Christian departed were gradually introduced.

The Jewish custom referred to above [14] found its counterpart in the practice of the early Church That she also considered it good and wholesome to pray for the dead is manifest in the large volume of testimony which has come down to us from that remote epoch.

In the first place, it may be permissible to refer to the now famous passage of St. Paul in his second letter to Timothy. It has long been a subject of dispute as to the Apostle's meaning when he says: "The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus. . . . The Lord grant unto him to find mercy of the Lord in that day." [15] Now, while it cannot perhaps be stated with positive assurance that this is a pious prayer for the deceased Onesiphorus — since it is not certain that he was dead — still, a careful analysis of the manner in which St. Paul expresses himself in regard to that friend would lead one to believe that Onesiphorus was actually dead. In noticing the good deeds of his benefactor St. Paul seems to mention his name with a touch of regret, that he is now no more. Many theories as to the whereabouts of Onesiphorus at that time are possible; he may have been absent on business, or for any other reason whatsoever. Or again, in the meantime he may have died. While this passage therefore

[14] The Jews still believe in a future middle state, where the souls of the departed are purified for heaven; and they hold that prayers are of avail for the dead.— Rock, *Hierurgia*, II, p. 78, ed. 1892.

[15] II *Tim.* i, 16–8.

cannot be claimed as an argument for prayers for the dead, it surely serves as an indication of the Apostle's solicitude for his brethren both during their lifetime and before the judgment seat of God. Whether Onesiphorus therefore was alive or dead at this time, the passage shows that the prayers of the faithful follow their brethren even to the next world;[16] since the Apostle undoubtedly refers to the day of judgment.[17]

By reason of the prevalence of martyrdom during this epoch we naturally find more references to death and immediate glory than to death and future suffering. Still, here and there we catch a glimpse of the general practices which reflected the belief of the period.

St. Justin Martyr, who died about 165, has a reference to what is sometimes considered a practice of the early faithful in assisting the dying.[18] The writer is commenting on the words of the twenty-first psalm,[19] "But thou, O Lord, remove not thy help to a distance from me; look towards my defence." He refers it all to Christ, praying lest any one should possess his soul. St. Justin then exhorts Christians to pray in the same way at death, "in order that when we come to our

[16] Luckock, op. c. ch. xx, admits that, this is a passage, "which the unbiased interpreter cannot fail to understand as a prayer for the dead."

[17] Some also take the words in I *Cor.* xv, 29, as an indication that St. Paul recognized the principle of praying for or assisting the dead. He says: "Otherwise what shall they do that are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not again at all? Why are they then baptized for them?" He may here refer to a superstitious practice of some in receiving baptism for a friend who had died without the sacrament; or, again, he may speak of the practice of praying and performing works of penance for the deceased. In any case the passage is not entirely clear.

[18] Kirsch, op. c. p. 40, also holds this opinion which is, at least, probable.

[19] *Ps.* xxi, 21.

last hour, we may ask the same favor of God who is able to drive off all the wicked angels, lest they seize our souls. At the hour of death let us thus pray that our souls fall not under any such evil power." [20] Thus it would seem that it was customary, or at least, in accordance with the prevailing belief, to assist the dying with prayer to escape any future punishment.

As if in confirmation of such a practice, there is a very old bit of testimony handed down in the form of an inscription in the catacomb of St. Priscilla, in Rome. It dates from the second or third century, and is very important in that it points to a custom then in vogue, and evidently traceable back for a considerable period. This inscription was found in fragments and the pieces reunited. The part which bears on our subject is as follows:

VOS PRECOR O FRATRES ORARE HVC QVANDO VENITIS
ET PRECIBVS TOTIS PATREM NATVMQUE ROGATIS
SIT VESTRAE MENTIS AGAPES CARAE MEMINISSE
VT DEVS OMNIPOTENS AGAPEN IN SAECVLA SERVET.[21]

The words, *huc quando venitis,* refer to the custom of assembling in or near the cemeteries, and there celebrating the memory of the departed. This ceremony was of the highest antiquity, although after the fifth century it ceased as a general practice by reason of abuses which sometimes took place. In those assemblies prayer was offered up for the deceased, psalms and hymns were sung, the Eucharist sometimes was received, and the faithful partook of a light repast. It was abuses in this latter which caused the meetings to

[20] *Dialog. cum Tryphone, P. G.* vi, 721.
[21] Marucchi, *Ginde des Cat. Rom.* ii ed. p. 391.

be discontinued. These gatherings were called funeral love-feasts, the Christian Agape (ἀγάπη).[22]

This funeral agape is spoken of in many ancient documents. Rules are laid down for its proper conduct, abuses are mentioned to be corrected, and in divers ways we learn both its antiquity and its nature.[23]

Not only in public ceremonies was prayer offered for the deceased, but we find the Fathers exhorting the faithful to practise private devotions for this same purpose.

Tertullian, who flourished about the first half of the third century (died 240), speaking of a widow's duty towards her departed spouse, says: "She prays for his soul, and implores relief (*refrigerium*) for him, as well as a reunion in the first resurrection; she makes an offering on the anniversary of his demise."[24] The last words refer to a public commemoration. He adds that what he says of the wife applies also to the husband.[25]

Again, speaking of a man who had married twice, he says: "You cannot slight your former spouse, to whom you still show a more religious reverence, since she has already been received by the Lord: you pray for her soul, and make annual offerings for her."[26] Summing up many things of long standing tradition,

[22] It is hardly necessary to remark that this is not the same Agape mentioned in the above inscription. These were also distinct from the Eucharistic Agape.

[23] For account of Agape see *Cath. Encyclop.* s. v.—*Encyclop. of Religion and Ethics*, s. v. n. 4.

[24] "Enimvero et pro anima ejus orat, et refrigerium interim adpostulat ei: et in prima resurrectione consortium, et offert annuis diebus dormitionis ejus." *De Monogamia*, c. x. *P. L* ii, 942.

[25] L. c. col. 943.

[26] *De Exhort. Cast.* c. xi. L. c. 926.

he includes among them the fact that, "we make offerings for the deceased on the anniversary of their departure." [27]

Again, he tells of a woman who had died. "Before her burial, while prayers were being offered up by the priest, she raised her hands in suppliant attitude at the first word, and replaced them at the end of the prayer for peace." [28]

Now, in the various passages from Tertullian it is necessary to bear in mind that he alludes to these prayers as a matter calling for no explanation whatever. He refers to them as to a well-understood practice. This consideration adds force to the value of his words.

Such also is the spirit exhibited in the famous inscription of Abercius, which is held to be anterior to the year 216.

ταῦθ' ὁ νοῶν εὔξαιθ' ὑπὲρ Ἀβερκίου πᾶς ὁ συνῳδός.

May he who understands this, and is of the same mind, pray for Abercius.[29]

Arnobius, the Christian apologist, who flourished in the third century, demands why our places of assembly are ruthlessly destroyed; for in them, "prayer is offered up to the great God, and peace and pardon implored for magistrates, armies, kings, friends, enemies, for the living and *the dead*." [30]

In order to understand more in detail the actual beneficiaries of these prayers mentioned by Arnobius, we have before us the words of an Eastern Father

[27] "Oblationes pro defunctis, pro natalitiis annua die facimus. *De Cor. Mil.* c. iii. *P. L.* ii, 70.
[28] *De Anima*, c. li.
[29] Cf. Leclerc, in *Dict. Théolog.*, s. v.
[30] *Cont. Gent.* l. iv, c. xxxvi. *P. L.* v, 1076.

writing for the Christians of the Orient. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386), after indicating the above objects of prayers at the holy Sacrifice, adds: "We then remember all those who have fallen asleep; first, the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, that through their supplications and intercession God may receive our prayer. Then (*we offer*) for the holy fathers and bishops, and in general, for all those who have died in our midst: believing that an immense benefit (μεγίστην ὄνησιν) will accrue to those souls for whom our prayers are offered, whilst the holy and adorable Victim lies before us." [31]

It would be difficult to find a clearer exposition of Catholic faith, and the distinction between prayers to the saints and prayers for the other dead, than in the above solemn asseveration of this venerable bishop. Here we find the belief common to all the early Church that the martyrs stood not in need of prayers, but rather were honored by having commemoration made for them in the adorable Sacrifice. While on the other hand, other persons, even of approved lives, are remembered that God may have mercy on them. If there is a more positive assertion than the above in ancient times with regard to the help afforded the holy souls by prayer and Sacrifice, it has not yet appeared.

Similar ideas are expressed in like terms by St. Epiphanius. With regard to this custom of commemorating the departed he tells us that it is useful to the living to revive in their breasts hopes of immortality, and to teach them to look upon their departed brethren as friends gone on a journey. He then observes: "We make mention both of the just and of sinners; of the latter, to implore for them mercy from the

[31] *Cat.* xxiii, n. 9. *P. G.* xxxiii, 1115.

Lord; and of the former, as well as of the fathers and patriarchs, the prophets, apostles, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, bishops, anchorites, and the whole body of the faithful, in order that thereby honoring our Lord Jesus Christ in a special way, we consider them apart from all other men." [32]

A remarkable proof of the general belief in the efficacy of prayers for the departed comes down from the hand of one of the illustrious martyrs of the early African Church. Vibia Perpetua, a young married lady of noble family, suffered martyrdom, together with four companions,[33] under Septimius Severus, at Carthage, in 203.

During her imprisonment St. Perpetua had a number of visions, an account of which she committed to writing. In one of these visions the saint beheld her young brother Dinocrates, who had died at the age of seven years. She saw him come forth from a dark place where there were many more persons. He was suffering from heat and thirst, and was pale and unkempt, and bore upon his face a disfigurement, evidently from cancer, which it seems he had suffered from before he died. A deep chasm yawned before the saint so that she could not assist the child. Before him was a well from which he tried to drink. But the

[32] "Quod vero spectat ad ritum illum, quo mortuorum nomina pronuntiantur, quid eo esse potest utilius? Nempe ut qui adsunt certissime sibi persuadeant mortuos vivere, nec in nihilum redactos esse, sed existere adhuc atque apud Dominum vivere; tum ut religiosissimum illud dogma praedicetur, quo qui pro fratribus precantur, bene de illis sperare constat, quasi peregre profectis. Ceterum quae pro mortuis concipiuntur preces, iis utiles sunt, tametsi non omnes culpas exstinguant . . . Justorum pariter," etc.— *Adv. Haeres.* l. iii, haer. 75, n. 8. P. G. xlii, 514. Cf. also *Expositio Fidei*, n. 23.

[33] When first arrested these persons were simple catechumens: they were baptized before being led away to prison.

rim is too high, and he struggles in vain. This grieves his sister, and she prays for him night and day.

After some time she beheld him again. All is changed. The place where Dinocrates is seen is all bright: he is once more a beautiful, well-dressed, and happy child (*refrigerantem*), and a simple scar shows upon his countenance. The rim of the well is now down to his waist, he drinks from an inexhaustible golden goblet which lies near the well, and refreshed, goes off to play after the wont of happy children. "Then," adds the sister, "I knew that he had been freed from suffering." [34]

Now, whether Dinocrates died a Christian or a pagan [35] does not destroy the force of the argument for our contention. Since we are endeavoring to show simply the belief common in those times.

The saint relates this vision as though to help a soul after death were perfectly in accord with what she had been taught. It shows beyond doubt that this belief was firmly rooted at that time. Moreover, we are given to understand the consolation which such a tenet infused into the hearts of the survivors, a thought which the Florentine expressed a thousand years later:

> Di' a Giovanna mia che per me chiami
> Là dove agli 'nnocenti si risponde.[36]

[34] "Tunc intellexi translatum eum esse de poena." *Acta SS. Perpet. et Felicit.*, c. ii, n. 3, seq. *P. L.* iii, 34–9.

[35] Many writers hold with St. Augustine (*De Anima*, i, 10) that Dinocrates was in purgatory suffering for lighter faults, and was freed through his sister's prayers. Others affirm that this child was a pagan when he died, though this is by no means certain, and cannot be proved. Still others believed that by means of St. Perpetua's intercession he received baptism after death. This latter opinion is wholly untenable, since, among other reasons, it destroys the notion of a sacrament which is for wayfarers only.

[36] "Tell my Giovanna, that for me she call
There, where reply to innocence is made."
— Dante, *Purg.*, c. viii.

The so-called Apostolic Constitutions, reflecting the usage of the third and fourth centuries, express the same common belief in the efficacy of prayers for the dead. "Let us pray for our brethren who have fallen asleep in Christ, that in His immense charity towards men, God, who has received the soul of the departed, may forgive him all sin, grievous and light *(voluntarium et non voluntarium)*: may He prove merciful and kind to him, and place him in the region of the holy who have been freed." [37]

All the documents of antiquity point in the same direction. The idea of immortality ever uppermost in the Christian mind could never associate the departure of their brethren hence with utter extinction: nay, it was ever a brief separation. Now and then, it is true, a heretic would arise to challenge this belief; but as in the case of Aërius in the fourth century,[38] the vigorous denunciation that his denial evoked proved all the more conclusively that the contrary truth had long before struck deep roots.

Early Christian epigraphy is filled with examples of prayers and good wishes for the dead. VIVAS CUM DEO, VIVE CUM CHRISTO, SUSCEPTAM HABETO ANIMAM EIUS, are the ordinary modes of bidding a temporary farewell to the departed spirit.[39] The very at-

[37] *Constit. Apostol.* viii, 41. Mansi, *Coll. Ampliss.*, t. i, 587.—St. Theodore Studite echoes this sentiment in writing to a nun: "Curam igitur quoad potes, habe animae boni illius viri: quoniam etiam post mortem a viventibus adjuvantur qui vita functi sunt." L. ii, ep. 205.

[38] Aërius seems to have been a factious malcontent, who became disgruntled on not being appointed bishop. He denied the efficacy of prayers for the dead, and held other false notions. He enjoyed a small following in Sebaste, and is confuted by St. Epiphanius, *Adv. Haeres.*, l. iii, haer. 75; St. Augustine, *Haeres.*, liii. *P. L.* xlii, 39.

[39] All these expressions, such as, also, IN PACE, VIVAS IN PACE,

mosphere of the catacombs seems impregnated with the fervent outpourings of love and prayer wafted by the living to the souls of the deceased. Hence, in the early ages mentioned above, they avoided such harsh terms as death, and grave: their departed had "fallen asleep,"[40] death was a *recessio*, a *praecessio*,[41] their resting place was a *coementerium*, κοιμητήριον, and the bodies placed therein were sacred, for they had been the temples of the Holy Ghost.

This thought caused the faithful to look with ill-concealed horror on cremation, and the Roman *columbarium*. They even risked their lives on many occasions in order to rescue the remains of the martyrs. The Church ever legislated against such an inhuman practice as indiscriminately burning the bodies of the dead. Later on, Charlemagne legislating for the Saxons, made it a capital offense.[42]

Besides mentioning the dead in a particular manner during the Mass, as is practised at the present day,[43] the Church also made use of a peculiar method

VIVAS IN DEO — ΕΝ ΘΕΩ ΖΗΣΗΣ — indicate a timid anxiety and a prayer for future happiness.

[40] St. Jerome says of his friend, the pious Christian matron, Paula: "*Dormivit* sancta et beata Paula." *Vita S. Paulae, sub fine.*

[41] The term still found in the Mass. "Memento etiam, Domine, famulorum . . . qui nos *praecesserunt* cum signo fidei, et *dormiunt* in somno pacis."

[42] "Si quis corpus defuncti hominis secundum ritum paganorum flamma consumi fecerit, et ossa ejus ad cinerem redegerit, capite punietur." Mansi, Append. III, t. xiii, col. 182, n. 7.

On the contrary, "Jubemus ut corpora Christianorum Saxonum ad coemeteria ecclesiae deferantur, et non ad tumulos paganorum." L. c. 184, n. 22.

[43] In one of the ancient Masses discovered and published by Möne, we find: "Defunctorum fidelium animae quae beatitudinem gaudent (*sic*) nobis opetulentur: quae consolatione indigent, ecclesiae precibus absolvantur." Cf. *P. L.* cxxxviii, 870, *Missa* iv. For account of these Masses cf. Denzinger, *P. L.* l. c. 855.

of commemorating her departed. This was by means of the Diptychs.

The diptych (διπτύχον), as is known, was simply a small tablet united by a hinge or other contrivance to another tablet.[44] They were made of wood, metal, ivory, or other strong material. The inner surface being covered with wax received the names written thereon. The Christian diptychs were used for various purposes. There were the diptychs of the living, of bishops of a certain see, of saints, and the diptychs of the dead. No one was written there unless he belonged to the Church; those outside the Church for any reason, as well as heretics deceased, were never mentioned. The diptychs thus became a sign of union with the Church. The names of benefactors living and dead were inscribed on these tablets, and were read out during the holy Sacrifice, special prayers being offered for all such persons. Thus the Mass became the badge and the external bond that united the three grand divisions of the Church, Militant, Triumphant, and Suffering.[45] In this way we find every Church with its own particular diptychs, but the dead were commemorated in an especial manner. The saints were sometimes mentioned as intercessors, and the other dead were remembered that their pains, if still in need, might be lessened or entirely removed. These various forms of diptychs afterwards formed the basis of the so-called calendars, or martyrologies.

There still remain in the Mass vestiges of these ancient formulas, though the diptychs as a particular form disappeared between the twelfth and the four-

[44] Called triptych, polyptych, etc., when more than two tablets were used.

[45] Magani, *L'Antica Liturgia Romana*, t. ii, p. 268. The whole chapter is a learned discussion on the use of the diptychs.

teenth centuries. The references in question are found in the *Memento* for the living, and in that for the dead, which are still to be seen in the Roman Missal.[46] It may be remarked that custom varied at different periods and divers places as regards these diptychs, but the principle of praying for the dead remained uniform, in spite of minor changes in the form and the manner of commemoration.

The Christian funeral itself was a powerful factor in keeping alive the sentiment of union between the Church Militant and the vast army of the departed.

In the first place, as St. Cyprian tells us, the death of a Christian was ever a source of spiritual joy to his friends: "Pious exercises, not a funeral."[47] This, however, should be understood in contrast with the pagans. For it would be inaccurate to state, as some writers have done, that the Christians always rejoiced at the death of their loved ones, and that they manifested no signs of grief or sorrow. Prudentius, the Christian poet (d. 405), tells us to grieve for ourselves at the death of others.[48] Their joy was spiritual: they rejoiced that a faithful disciple of Christ had been summoned to his eternal reward. This feeling was in marked contrast to that of the idolaters who often looked upon death as the end of all. Still, those early Christians were endowed with intensely human feelings and emotions. The writings of the Fathers often

[46] Magani, l. c., p. 269.

[47] *De Mortalit.*, c. 16. "His friends (of the deceased) declare him happy, as indeed he really is, since he has won the crown of victory." Auct. *Eccl. Hier.*, c. vii, n. 3. *P. G.* iii, 555.

[48] Quin lex eadem movet omnes
Gemitum dare sorte sub una,
Cognataque funera nobis
Aliena in morte dolere.
Cathemer., hym. x. *P. L.* lix, 881.

bear witness to this fact. The epitaphs in their cemeteries not unfrequently indicate the same sentiment.

St. Paulinus of Nola brings out this fact in his letter to Pammachius on the death of the latter's young wife Paulina, who was the daughter of Paula. The Saint commends Pammachius because, "you have not," he says, "accompanied her demise with mere empty weeping, as do the greater part of men, nor with a vain show of idle pomp and splendor, as they who have no Christian hope; but you have manifested your solicitude by offering for her soul a healing balm and good works, with alms."[49] This discloses a direct reference to faith in purgatory and the efficacy of good works and alms for the departed. He adds: "You displayed your grief in proper measure: tears for the temporal loss, alms-deeds for her soul."[50]

There is perhaps in all antiquity no more touching example than the sorrow manifested by the holy virgin, Eustochium, on the death of her mother, Paula. These two pious women were of noble Roman extraction. They were the devoted friends of St. Jerome in Palestine. The great Doctor gives expression on many occasions to the intense grief he experienced on the death of Paula. Although he says that he rejoices since she now lives with God,[51] still he cannot conceal the poignancy of his sorrow.[52] And although there was no noisy demonstration of grief as

[49] "Quam non vanam fletibus, ut maxima pars mortalium, neque vano, ut spei nostrae expertes solent, pomparum inanium honore comitatus es: sed remediis salutaribus et vivis operibus, hoc est, eleemosynis prosecutus." *Ep.* xiii, n. 3. *P. L.* xxiii, 209.

[50] "Sua enim cuique parti debita persolvisti, lacrymas corpori fundens, eleemosynam animae infundens." L. c., n. 10, col. 213.

[51] *Ep.* cviii, *ad Eustochium. P. L.* xxii, 878.

[52] Towards the end of the letter he says: "But why tarry longer, and thus increase my sorrow?"

was wont at pagan funerals, still the multitude of the poor who had been the beneficiaries of Paula's immense charity bewailed her loss as that of a mother. Her own daughter Eustochium gave way to every sign of grief, "as a child being weaned from its mother. She refused to leave the mortal remains of her parent, but remained ever there, kissing her eyes, her face, and embracing all that was left of her dearest friend; nay, she insisted on being buried with her mother." [53] This surely evinces a human touch of sympathy and grief even in the case of pious Christians. In a last burst of tender affection the holy Doctor exclaims, "Farewell, O Paula! Assist by thy prayer the declining years of thy faithful friend. Thy faith and thy works make thee the friend of Christ: now, being united with Him, thou wilt the more easily obtain what thou askest." [54]

It was customary to make commemoration of the dead for some time afterward. St. Jerome tells us that the obsequies of Paula lasted a whole week. During this period of mourning psalms were recited, hymns were sung, and prayers offered up to God. This recital of hymns and psalms at the death of the faithful was an ancient tradition, even in the fourth century, as we learn from St. Jerome in his life of St. Paul the hermit.[55]

Scarcely had the Christian breathed forth his soul,

[53] L. c., col. 905.

[54] Col. 906.

[55] St. Anthony in burying St. Paul, "hymnos quoque et psalmos de Christiana traditione decantans." *Vita S. Pauli*, n. 16. *P. L.* xxxiii, 27. Cf St. Gregory Nazianzen, Orat. v, *Cont. Jul.*, n. 16: "Per totam noctem productis canticis, et accensis facibus, quibus nos Christiani pium e vita discessum ornandum existimamus."

when his friends closed his eyes and mouth.[56] The body then was wrapped in a white shroud[57] and embalmed in precious ointment and aromatic spices — a custom of ancient origin in the East. By the fourth century on account of the large number of Christians, embalming was superseded by the practice of sprinkling a few drops of precious balm on the corpse[58] We have a description of early Christian obsequies left by the author of the work entitled, "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy."[59]

The deceased was borne to the church. If he was in sacred orders he was placed before the altar, where the clergy gathered and offered up prayer and thanksgiving to God. If the deceased was a monk or a layman, the remains were kept outside the sanctuary, and prayers were offered up by the priest. Then the deacons read passages from Holy Writ pointing to the promises of the resurrection, and psalms referring to the same subject were sung.[60] After this the catechumens are dismissed, and the archdeacon commemorates the holy dead, and prays that the recently

[56] We learn this also from Dionysius Alex. (Euseb. *H. E.* vii, 22), when he says that during a plague in Egypt, some of the faithful "would take up in their arms the bodies of those who had just died, and close their eyelids and mouth. . . . Shortly afterwards these very persons would have the same thing done for them."

[57] Candore nitentia claro.
Praetendere lintea mos est.
— Prudentius, l. c., line 49–50.

[58] Prudentius refers to this:
Aspersaque myrrha Sabaeo
Corpus medicamine servat.
— *Cathemer.*, hym. x. *P. L.* lix, 880.

[59] This work is now thought to belong to the fifth century. *Cath. Encyclop.* s. v. *Dionysius.*

[60] Tertullian speaks of Christians using incense at the burial of their dead. *De Idololat.*, c. xi; *Adv. Gent.*, c. xlii.

departed be united with them. He also urges all to implore happiness for the deceased. Drawing near to the corpse the priest prays over it, and salutes it, as do all those present. Afterwards oil is poured on the remains, and they are placed in a fit sepulcher with other holy remains.[61]

The sepulcher during the Roman persecutions was usually a *loculus* in one of the cemeteries. These burial places have been re-opened in modern times, and archæologists have been busily engaged in giving to the world learned studies on the customs and practices of the early faithful in regard to their dead.[62] A favorite place of burial and one much sought after was near the tombs of the martyrs,[63] since it was believed that proximity to those holy remains would assure more prayers from the pilgrims who from all parts of the world flocked around the shrines of these champions of the faith.

A commemoration of the departed was made on several days following his demise. Prayers were again offered up for the repose of his soul. These commemorations were held on the third,[64] ninth, and fortieth days. Sometimes a love-feast, ἀγάπη, was held, and the poor were entertained,[65] and alms distributed to them, all in suffrage for the deceased.

[61] *De Eccl. Hierarch.*, c. vii, n. 3. *P. G.* iii, 555.

[62] A good many writers have given us learned works on this subject. Among the archæologists, consult, De Rossi, *Bollettino;* Marucchi, *Guide des Catacombes Romaines,* and *Éléments d'archéologie Chrét;* Armellini, *Gli Antichi Cimiteri,* ecc.; Garrucci, *L'Arte Cristiana,* ecc. Wilpert, etc.

[63] Cf. chap. on martyrs.

[64] "Exequiae mortuorum fiant tertio die adhibitis psalmis, precibus, et lectionibus." *Constit. Apost.* viii, 42. Mansi, i, 590.

[65] "Agapes nostrae pauperes pascunt." S. Aug. *C. Faust.* xx, 4, 20.

Flowers also were scattered on the tombs, but not on the head, as this was a pagan custom.[66] The Fathers endeavored to dissuade the living from an excessive manifestation of grief, since thereby the pagans were scandalized.[67]

Finally, the anniversary, *Natalitium*, was celebrated with great devotion.[68] Thus we see that the Church never abandoned her children, even after they had been summoned hence.[69]

The Church would surely miss one of the most effective means of helping the dead were she to omit the application of the greatest of all offerings, the Sacrifice of the Mass. The value of this august Propitiation for the departed rests on the grand principle of the unity of the Church. Christ died for all men: the Mass is but a repetition of the oblation on the Cross, and the Mass offered up for the repose of the departed avails them proportionately much in the same way that it does the living. If the merits of Christ's passion are applied to the needs of man through the holy Sacrifice, it is but just that it extend to man in any

[66] For description of Christian funeral see Armellini, *Gli Ant. Cim.*

[67] "Simulata, ficta, fucata, videntur esse quae dicimus," is the reason alleged by St. Cyprian, *De Mortal.* xx.

[68] "Anno exacto ad habendam memoriam ipsius defuncti, et suppeditatur ex bonis ejus pauperibus ad recordationem ejusdem." Cons. Apost., l. c.— In chap. xliii: "Nihil de impio mortuo, quia nihil juvare."— St. Greg. Naz., on the death of his brother Cæsarius, says: "Alia quidem solvimus, alia vero dabimus, anniversarios honores et commemorationes offerentes, ii quidem certe qui superstites erunt." *Orat.* vii, c. 15.

[69] St. Augustine says to the point: "Non sunt praetermittendae supplicationes pro spiritibus mortuorum: quas faciendas pro omnibus in Christiana et Catholica societate defunctis, etiam tacitis eorum nominibus, eorum sub generali commemoratione suscepit Ecclesia: ut quibus ad ista desunt parentes, aut filii, aut quicumque cognati vel amici, ab una eis exhibeatur pia matre communi." *De Curis pro Mort.*, c. iv.

state wherein he may stand in need of help, and where he is not entirely cut off, as are the souls of the lost, from communion with the mystical Body of Christ. Since the soul at death often retains a debt of temporal punishment to the divine Justice, the prayers of the Church in behalf of that soul are strengthened immeasurably by means of the Sacrifice of the Mass. And since, as observed, the object of this Sacrifice is much the same as that of the Cross — to wash away the sins and guilt of man — it appears evident that in no other way can the departed soul receive relief — *refrigerium* — more surely than by the application of this infinite remedy.

That the Church always practiced this belief is seen in the writings of the ancient Fathers.[70] Frequently we are told that the catechumens were dismissed at a certain part of the service, which indicates the subsequent celebration of the divine Mysteries.[71] In the so-called Canons of Hippolytus we read that, "when commemoration is made for the dead, the faithful before sitting down *(at the banquet)* should receive the Holy Communion."[72] The ancient liturgies make explicit remembrance of the dead. Whenever they mention the living, they add a remembrance also for the deceased, and they also distinguish between the saints and the ordinary faithful departed.

St. John Chrysostom assigns this custom to Apostolic times. "Nor was it without reason that the practice was sanctioned by the Apostles to make re-

[70] The Greeks from early times were wont to commemorate all the dead on the Saturday before Lent, and the Saturday before Pentecost. Every Saturday Mass was said for the departed. Moroni, *Dizionario*, t. xv, p. 60.

[71] Cf. *Const. Apost.* quoted above.

[72] "Si fit ἀνάμνησις pro iis qui defuncti sunt, primum antequam consideant mysteria sumant." *Can.* 169.

membrance of the dead in the tremendous Sacrifice." [73] St. Cyrian speaks of those who in their last will had made a priest or cleric their executor, or guardian. He refers to a decree of the bishops to the effect that Mass was not to be offered for such persons, thus alluding to the custom of offering Mass for others. He declares that Mass and prayers were not to be said in chuch for a certain Victor, who had violated this decree: thus enticing priests into secular pursuits and business.[74]

St. Augustine speaking for the fourth century, calls this a "universal custom of the Church, one handed down by the Fathers, that when they who have died in the true faith are remembered at the Holy Sacrifice, prayer be then said, and the Sacrifice offered up for them." [75] His own mother begs that after her death, he remember her at the altar.[76] He tells us that St. Monica was buried after the august Oblation had been offered for her, as was the custom.[77] And Possidius relates that the great Doctor himself was buried with these rites of the Church. "The Sacrifice was offered to God, and he was buried." [78]

The various traditions in East and West were thus ever united on this question of praying and applying

[73] "Neque enim temere ab Apostolis haec sancita fuerunt, ut in tremendis mysteriis defunctorum agatur commemoratio." *Hom.* lxix ad pop. Antioch.

[74] "Non offerretur pro eo, nec sacrificium pro dormitione ejus celebraretur." *Ep.* lxvi, n. 2.

[75] "Hoc a patribus traditum universa observat Ecclesia, ut pro eis qui in Corporis et Sanguinis Christi communione defuncti sunt, cum ad ipsum sacrificium loco suo commemorantur, oretur, ac pro illis quoque id offerri commemoretur." *Serm.* clxxii. *P. L.* xxxviii, 936. See this whole sermon.

[76] *Confess.* ix, 13, n. 36.

[77] L. c., c. xii, n. 32.

[78] Possidius, *Vita Augustini*, c. xxxi. *P. L.* xxxii, 64.— Cf. Magani, *L'Ant. Lit. Rom.*, t. ii, p. 305. *I Dittici dei Morti.*

the Mass for the alleviation of the deceased who were in need of help.[79] In the course of time it became customary to simply note the place in the Missal where such commemoration was to be made, and to leave to the celebrant the mention of these persons. This usage is found noted in a Gallic Missal of the seventh century,[80] and is still the practice of the Church.

It is interesting to follow up the various practices that came into being with regard to the dead. The conviction of the truth of this doctrine gave rise to many societies, whose avowed object was to succor the needy after death. Thus the famous Gilds, chiefly the religious Gilds, aimed principally at mutual assistance both here and in the world to come.

In the first place, it is to be noted that the pagan Romans had formed associations called *collegia funeralia,* that attended to the burial of their deceased members. The Christian, imbued with the highest respect for the remains of his dead, spared no pains, dreaded no danger that might tend to deter him from paying the last rites to the departed. For him there was another motive. That body had been the temple of the Holy Spirit, and as such was deserving of the most reverent treatment: it had a right to a Christian burial where it might if possible be placed together with the remains of the brethren. Thus the soul would enjoy those special prayers and good works wont to be performed by local congregations and churches for the departed whose remains reposed in their midst. So strong was this feeling among the people that it can best be measured by their horror of cremation. This, as remarked elsewhere, the Church never permitted or

[79] Cf. Trent, Sess. xxii. c. ii, and Sess. xxv, *Decret. de Purg.*
[80] *Missale Francorum* Cf. Muratori, *Lit. Rom. Vet.* ii, p. 694.

sanctioned, except in grave danger of plague or pestilence.

After the Church began to own temples of worship throughout the world it became customary to bury the faithful in the sacred edifices, or near them. This practice, however, soon led to abuses, as well as inconvenience to the living. The result was that burial in churches was reserved for the saints and martyrs, and, in later times, to persons of prominent rank, as prelates and princes.[81]

The Capitulars of Charlemagne often mention special prayers and offices performed in church for the departed. Thus we read in a Capitular drawn up in 817 for all the monks in the kingdom: "Let special psalms be sung for the dead."[82] On all fast days the Office of the Dead was recited.[83] The practice then of praying for the dead was reduced to a fixed law which regulated this custom and gave occasion to frequent prayer for the departed.

It was not by any means, however, in the monasteries alone that such practices existed. The monks at that time being given over to a life of piety were naturally more assiduous in their spiritual exercises; hence the frequency with which they applied themselves to such devotions was entirely in keeping with their life of retirement. Among the laity we find the same spirit of confidence and prayerful turning towards the souls of their departed loved ones to assist them, by prayer and good works.

[81] In the Capitulars of Charlemagne we find: "Nullus deinceps in ecclesia mortuum sepeliat." *Cap.* l. i, c. cliii.

[82] Chap. l. Apud Canciani, *Barbarorum Leges Antiquae*, t. iii, p. 363. This idea is elaborated in a petition presented to Charles by the monks of Fulda. L. c.

[83] L. c., p. 365, n. 10.

This prevalent belief received definite shape and organized form in the famous societies called Gilds. Much has been written on the subject of these organizations, and some uncertainty seems still to attach to their origin.[84] Some writers believe that the Gilds were a later development of the old Roman *Collegia*. This opinion does not appear well founded, for there is no evidence to show and to prove this connection. True, they had this in common, that each was a society for mutual protection. But the transition natural or forced from one to the other has not been demonstrated. The Gild in its later form, as it existed among the Danes, aimed chiefly in many places at taking summary vengeance for the murder of any one of its members.[85] Thus we read that the members of one of these Gilds put to death those who had a part in the murder of King Canute.[86]

A further development of the lawful Gild comprised mutual help, pecuniary assistance, pensions for the widows of deceased members, burial expenses, alms and Masses for the departed. They endeavored to do all that was possible in order to help the souls of the dead. Prayers were recited, hymns and psalms were sung, and everything was conducted with a solemn but simple piety.[87]

[84] Cf. Lingard, *Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, ch. vii.

[85] Bertholinus, *De Causis*, l. i, c. viii

[86] Canciani, op. c. t. ii, p. 334. These particular Gilds, called *gildonia*, were afterwards suppressed by Charlemagne in the laws which he established for the Lombards.— *Leges Langobard.*, c. i, n. 13. Canciani, t. i, p. 150.

[87] During this period the converts from paganism retained many of their barbarous customs. The Church and the civil authorities were ever zealous to uproot all abuses in this matter, and finally they succeeded. The laws of the times, and the terrific denunciations by Popes and prelates give us an insight into many of these impious practices. It seems that among many

Under Aethelstan we find a decree for the Gilds to the effect that, "If a member of our society dies, let each member give one loaf (*in alms*) for his soul, and recite fifty psalters."[88] This was the origin of doles.

This spirit of mutual help and succor seems to have been one of the characteristic features of the age. Everywhere we discover mention of this practice in various forms. Thus, in a French synod held about 760, each Bishop present pledged himself to recite one hundred psalters, and to have his priests sing one hundred Masses, for any member who should die. The Bishop himself said thirty Masses. Abbots were to have thirty Masses said by the Bishop, and to have their monks recite one hundred psalters, and their priests as many Masses for the same intention.[89]

So also in the famous *Concilium Tullense* (859) the Fathers present agreed that hereafter each would say Mass every Wednesday for all the others. In case of the death of one of them, each of the survivors would say seven Masses for his soul, and each priest would say three Masses.[90]

Walfridus Strabo assures us that, "it is the custom

of the tribes on the continent a "wake" was often the scene of feasting, joking, dancing, and the wildest carousing. There is almost a touch of grim humor in the following Capitular (l. vi, c cxcvii): "When they escort the dead to burial, let them not raise that terrific howl." Sometime a banquet was spread at the tomb and food distributed to the poor, as alms for the deceased. Abuses afterwards arose in this matter, and legislation forbade it (Gratianus, De Consecrat. dist. ii, c. *Non liceat*). Gradually, however, the Church succeeded in weaning these people from their former crude practices, and the Gilds did not a little to infuse a truly Christian spirit in all that concerned the dead. Cf. also Du Cange, *Gloss.* s. v. *Parentalia.*

[88] *Judicia Civ. Lundoniae,* Canciani, op. c. t. iv, p. 267. Ed. Venice, 1784.

[89] *Monumenta German. Histor., Legum,* sect. ii, t. i, p. 221. Ed. Hanover, 1883.

[90] *Conc. Tull.* can xiii. Labbè, t. viii, p. 678. Ed. Paris, 1671.

of the whole Church frequently to offer Mass for the living and the dead."[91] And a decree made in 817 by an assembly of Benedictine Abbots prescribed the duty incumbent upon all their members to recite daily ten psalms for the dead.[92]

The practice of offering up a certain number of Masses for the departed recalls the action of Pope St. Gregory the Great.[93] This saintly Pontiff tells us in his "Dialogues" that a certain religious, Justus by name, had died a few years before. One month after the death of Justus the Saint called the superior of the monastery and ordered him to say Mass every day for thirty days for the repose of the soul of the deceased. At the end of that time, Justus appeared to his brother, and declared that he had just been freed from the pains of Purgatory.[94] This fact gave origin to the so-called Gregorian Masses, which still constitute a pious devotion of the faithful. The Mass associations, so prevalent now, and the *Messbund* in Germany, are later manifestations of the spirit that actuated the Fathers of so many councils in having a certain number of Masses said for their members.

We cannot here refrain from drawing a comparison between the faith of England that was, and the belief as it exists to-day in that wonderful island. For nowhere else, perhaps, was the practice of praying, offer-

[91] "Totius Ecclesiae usus habet saepius Missas agere pro vivis et pro defunctis." *De Exord. Rer. Eccl. Mon. Germ. Hist. Legum*, sect. ii, t. ii, p. 496.

[92] *Mon. Germ.* l. c., t. i, p. 348–9.

[93] St. Anselm tells us it is useful to pray for the dead, so that others will pray for us. "Missae, elcemosynae, orationes, aliique pii labores his praesunt; maxime si ipsi viventes haec pro aliis fecerunt." *Elucidar.* inter op. t. iii, p. 269. Ed. 1573. Cf. also S. Aug. *De Cura Pro Mort*, c. iv.

[94] St. Greg. *Dialog.* iv, 55. *P. L.* lxxvii, 421.

ing alms and good works for the dead, more deeply rooted than in mediæval England.

Dr. Lingard has drawn with deft touch a beautiful picture of the Anglo-Saxon with his earnest solicitude for prayers for the departed. We shall quote freely a few facts mentioned by him,[95] since they are typical of a large number which we have verified elsewhere.

"While they trembled," he says, "lest, at the hour of death, their satisfaction should be deemed incomplete, they indulged a consoling hope, that the residue of the debt might be discharged by the charity of those who survived them. To secure the future exertions of his friends, was, in the eyes of the devout Saxon, an object of high importance." [96]

"Let us agree," wrote the King of Kent and the Bishop of Rochester, "that when any among us enters the path which leads to another life, the survivors shall, by their alms and sacrifices, endeavor to assist him in his journey. We have sent you the names of our deceased relatives, and beg that you will remember them in your prayers and oblations." [97]

The Venerable Bede refers continually to the practice, and he himself begs the monks of Lindisfarne to enroll his name, after death, among their own deceased, and to pray and have Masses said for his soul.[98]

As an example of the custom in vogue in the Saxon gilds, we transcribe a small portion of the laws relating to the duty of the gild members towards a brother who was called by death. "If any one belonging to

[95] *Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church.* American ed., 1848.
[96] Chap. vii.
[97] L. c., p. 150.
[98] Vita S. Cuthberti, *P. L.* xciv, 735–90.

our association chance to die, each member shall pay one penny for the good of the soul, before the body be laid in the grave. . . . If he die in the neighborhood, the steward shall summon as many members as he can assemble, attend the corpse in an honorable manner, carry it to the minster, and pray devoutly for the soul." [99]

Seizing every opportunity to gain help and suffrage for their souls, the wealthier class built churches, endowed monasteries, and erected monuments with pious inscriptions asking the prayers of the devout visitor. Nay, they sought burial in these places, that thus they might enjoy participation in the prayers of those who served the Lord day and night. Speaking of one of the kings, Bede says that, "he asked for a portion of land where he might build a monastery in which he himself was to be buried, for he firmly believed that much profit would come to his soul from the prayers of those who therein would serve God in that holy place." [100]

The names of these benefactors were entered in a catalogue, and prayers were periodically offered for the repose of their souls. In every monastery such lists were sedulously kept of all the deceased members. The names of those who had died during the year were entered on a parchment, called a Dead Bill, and carried from one religious house to the other, and all the brethren were requested to pray for the souls of those whose names were written thereon.

St. Boniface refers to this in a letter to the Abbot of Mount Cassino, asking that prayers be said for the

[99] *Monasticon Anglic.*, t. i, p. 278. This is from the Gild at Abbotsbury.

[100] Beda, *Hist.* l. iii, c. xxiii; iv, c. v.

living, and that Masses and prayers be offered for the departed whose names were sent reciprocally from one to the other.[101]

Alms were always distributed for the repose of the departed. Thus we have seen above that Pammachius in Rome gave generous alms after the death of Paulina. Alfred the Great left large alms to the poor, to the bishops, the churches, and to every clergyman in his dominions.[102] And Wilfrid, Archbishop of Canterbury, left sufficient funds to support and clothe twenty-one paupers, together with alms for twelve hundred poor persons on the anniversary of his death.[103] These facts are but a few of the countless number that might be adduced in support of this practice which everywhere existed in England — and on the continent — for many centuries.

It is surely instructive, if not edifying, to turn from this picture to the teachings of the later doctors of Europe. When they tell us that at death the soul is made perfect in holiness, the question persistently recurs: How is this sudden change to be effected? "It is not easy to discover," says Moehler, "how when the body is laid aside, sin is therefore purged out from the sinful spirit." [104]

Zwinglius admitted that prayer might be offered for the deceased, but he reprobated the practices of the Ro-

[101] "Diligenter quoque deprecamur, ut familiaritas fraternae charitatis inter nos sit, et pro viventibus oratio communis, et pro migrantibus de hoc seculo et orationes et Missarum solemnia celebrentur, quorum alternatim nomina defunctorum inter nos mittentur." *Ep.* cvi, *ad Optatum*, Ab. M. Cass. Cf. also *ep.* xcv Cuthb. Ab. to Lullus, successor to St. Boniface; and *ep.* lxxxiv (inter ep. S. Bonif.) of Dodo Ab. to Lullus.

[102] *Testam. Alfredi*, apud Walker, p. 195.

[103] *Evidentiae Eccl. Cantuar.*, p. 2017.

[104] Moehler, *Symbolism*, l. i, c. iii, n. 23.

man Church. "If any one, solicitous for the dead, offers up prayer and intercession for them, I do not condemn him." [105]

Calvin, on the other hand, was vehement in his condemnation of those who held the existence of Purgatory or the efficacy of prayers for the dead. With pious indignation he exclaims: "We hold that purgatory is an illusion that proceeds from the same shop whence emanate monastic vows, pilgrimages, and the use of images. . . . We reject such things as opposed to the true notion of merit, and because they are purely human inventions, imposing a yoke on our consciences." [106]

The latter-day representatives of Anglo-Saxon thought thus express themselves on prayers for the dead. "Prayer is to be made for things lawful, and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter: [107] but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin unto death." [108] Comment on this seems superfluous, in view of all that has been said above.

To the common and oft-repeated charge that prayers and alms for the dead are the invention of an interested clergy, we may answer in the words of Dr. Lingard:

[105] "Si quis pro mortuis sollicitus, apud Deum gratiam eis implorat aut precetur, non damno." 67 *Articles*, a. 60.

[106] "Nous tenons le purgatoire pour une illusion procédée de cette même boutique, de la quelle sont aussi procédés les voeux monastiques, pélerinages, défenses du mariage, et de l'usage des viandes, l'observation cérémonielle des jours. . . . Les quelles choses nous rejetons, non-seulement pour la fausse opinion du mérite qui y est attaché, mais aussi parce que ce sont des inventions humaines, qui imposent joug aux consciences."—*Conf. de Foi*, n. 24. Schaff, *Creeds*, t iii, p. 373–4.

[107] This expression may be understood better in the light of so-called *Conditionalism*.

[108] *Westmin. Conf.*, chap. xxi, n. 4.

"The idea may be philosophic, but it is pregnant with difficulties. The man who first detected the imposture, should have condescended to unfold the mysteries by which it had been previously concealed. He should have explained by what extraordinary art it was effected, that of the thousands who, during so many ages, practised the deception, no individual in an unguarded moment, no false brother in the peevishness of discontent, revealed the dangerous secret to the ears of a misguided and impoverished people. He should have shown why the conspirators preserved, even among themselves, the language of hypocrisy; why, in their private correspondence, they anxiously requested from each other the prayers which they mutually despised; and why they consented to make so many pecuniary sacrifices during life, merely to obtain what they deemed an illusory assistance after death. The whole tenor of their history deposes, that they believed the doctrine which they taught, and if they erred, they erred with every Christian Church which had existed since the first publication of the Gospel." [109]

This reflection appears to cover the matter thoroughly and unmistakably. It also shows that the reformers differ not only from the Roman Church and Catholic belief, but likewise from that of the present Russian-Greek Church. The Russian Church teaches that, "We must by all means offer up prayer and the unbloody Sacrifice for the departed, and at the same time distribute generous alms: since they cannot of themselves perform these pious works for their own benefit." [110]

[109] *Antiq. of the Anglo-Saxon Ch.* Ed. c., p. 154–5.
[110] Q. lxv.— Schaff, *Creeds*, ii, p. 345.

In the words of Bernard: "To sum up, the traditional and scholastic doctrine of the Communion of Saints resolves itself into the following points: there exists among all the members of the Church Militant, Triumphant, and Suffering, a spiritual society, that binds them one to the other and that unites them to Christ, as to their Head. The mystic character of this union begets a common participation in the same sacraments, that transmit to us the merits of Jesus Christ; the enjoyment in common of all the special good derived from the performance of ecclesiastical functions; and the reciprocal benefits of good works and merits, founded on charity, amongst all the members of Christ. All the faithful share in this spiritual union and community of good works according to the measure of their faith and their charity. The greater one's disposition the more copious his spiritual profit; Christ communicates to each one, according to his deserts, the grace which belongs to Him alone." [111]

If our non-Catholic friends were to meditate seriously and dispassionately on these truths of history and of faith, they would realize the lament which Dante places on the lips of Belacqua in Purgatory:

> "My brother! of what use to mount,
> When, to my suffering, would not let me pass
> The bird of God, who at the portal sits?
> Behoves so long that heaven first bear me round
> Without its limits, as in life it bore;
> Because I, to the end, repentant sighs
> Delay'd; if prayer do not aid me first,
> That riseth up from heart which lives in grace.
> What other kind avails, not heard in heaven." [112]

[111] Bernard, *Dict. de Théolog.*, t. iii, col. 447, *De Com. des Saints.*

[112] *Div. Com. Purg.*, canto iv.

CHAPTER V

THE BLESSED VIRGIN OUR MEDIATRIX

O Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son!
Created beings all in lowliness
Surpassing, as in height above them all;
. . . . . .
Here thou to us, of charity and love,
Art, as the noon-day torch; and art, beneath,
To mortal men, of hope a living spring.
. . . Whatsoe'er may be
Of excellence in creature, pity mild,
Relenting mercy, large munificence,
Are all combined in thee. — *Dante.*[1]

WHATEVER may be the angle or the viewpoint whence we present a consideration of the holy servants of God, such presentation is bound to be defective and incomplete unless it includes in a special manner, at least a brief survey of the supereminent height of glory upon which Mary, the Mother of our Redeemer, stands, at the very head of that vast array — the Communion of Saints. The unwonted height to which she attained was due to her dignity as Mother of God. As St. Gregory says, "by the sublimity of her merits she reached up to the very throne of the Godhead."[2] Nor should this thought prove but an occasion of barren admiration. Mary demands far more than a mere speculative consideration on our

[1] *Paradiso*, canto xxxiii.
[2] In I *Kings* i.

part, for, "who," exclaims the great Doctor of Africa, "can ever worthily repay thee the acts of thanksgiving and of praise that are thy due, for thy admirable consent which brought salvation to a forlorn world!" [3]

Nay, more. The life of the Savior is incomprehensible without a corresponding knowledge of Mary. If the relics of the saints are hallowed of men, how immeasurably greater is the veneration that belongs to her who gave her very blood that a God might become Incarnate! By her marvelous co-operation in an ineffable mystery, "God is brought down to earth, while man is enthroned in the highest heaven." [4] If Jesus is the Savior of men, Mary is their Mother. If the second Person of the Blessed Trinity lowered Himself to the level of His mortal creature, Mary was the golden link in the chain which made this conjunction feasible. If after the fall, finite man was incapable of rendering adequate compensation to an outraged God, Mary was the advocate whose eloquent pleading in the Incarnation enabled humanity to atone for an otherwise irreparable crime.

The world will never fully comprehend here below the vastness of its debt to Mary, since the world cannot understand the enormity of sin, nor fathom the mysterious depths of divine grace. Nothing but the uncircumscribed wisdom of God can penetrate the secret nature of sin and of grace. Consequently it is beyond the ken of mortal eye adequately to appreciate the grandeur of Mary's sanctity which raised her to an incomparable position above all the children of men, yea, above the most dazzling summits of the celestial hierarchy. With Mary, as with Jesus, though in a dif-

[3] St. Aug. Serm. xviii, *De Sanctis.*
[4] *St. Peter Chrysol.,* Serm. cxlii, *De Annunt.*

ferent way, human comparisons fall short of reality. When speaking of Mary imagination lends wings to reason, and even then the heights of her glory and power, penetrating the mysterious regions of the empyrean, transcend the limited vision of human intelligence.

This thought will the more readily appear credible if one grasp the underlying principle of created sanctity. For the basis upon which rests the doctrine of the Communion of Saints and the various degrees of saintly dignity, is, as explained above, that the measure of sanctity is judged by the nearness of the created being's approach to the Source whence all holiness flows. Since sanctity and holiness are simply conditions of the degree of God's friendship for His creatures, it is evident that Mary stands pre-eminently above all creation in regard to the divine friendship. The reason of this is that not only was she created and born Immaculate — thus never having been estranged from the Creator — but she attained to the closest union possible with Almighty God by being raised to the astounding relationship of God's Mother. Nor was this maternal union merely physical, since it is inconceivable that Christ should choose as His Mother one who was not possessed of a purity and holiness transcending that of the rest of creation.[5] It would, in a sense, be unworthy of Christ to be born of a Mother who, in grace and holiness, was the inferior of any created being. Hence, when the Angel Gabriel saluted her as "full of grace," he indicated the plenitude of her sanctity which raised the humble Virgin to the dignity of the divine maternity.

[5] "Rationabiliter creditur quod illa quae genuit Unigenitum a Patre, plenum gratiae et veritatis, prae omnibus aliis majora privilegia gratiae acceperit." *Sum. Theol.*, p. iii, q. xxvii, a. i.

In virtue of this prerogative Mary holds a unique position in creation. Not only does her personal merit raise her above all other created beings, but the ineffable nature of her relation to the Godhead appears astounding to the human intellect. In fact, as Mother of God, the Blessed Virgin has established, so to say, certain new external relations affecting each of the Divine Persons. By her part in the Incarnation the Father acquired a new paternal authority over the Son, inasmuch as Christ, according to His human nature, thus becomes subject to the Father.[6] The Son also receives a new nature by becoming Man in the womb of His human Mother, "the Word was made flesh." The Holy Ghost manifests, in an entirely unheard-of manner, the marvelous powers of the divine fecundity: "conceived of the Holy Ghost." Thus it is that, to use a phrase consecrated by the Fathers, Mary became the complement of the Blessed Trinity, uniting in her own soul the three Persons of the ever-glorious Triad by a singular and almost inconceivable union of love, power, and maternity.

Equally admirable is the position which the Blessed Virgin holds as a child of Adam. Of all the descendants of our original progenitors Mary alone was conceived and born pure. This special charm was conferred upon her in virtue of her exalted destiny. In the words of Pope Pius IX, "That doctrine was revealed by God which holds that the ever Blessed Virgin Mary in the very first instant of her conception was, by a singular privilege of Almighty God, and in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, preserved free from all stain of original sin."[7] By virtue of this

[6] *Sum. Theolog.* iii, q. xx, a. i.
[7] *Bulla Dogm. de Im. Concept. B. V. M.*

prerogative Mary stands forth as the noblest and the most exalted amongst the children of men — the solitary boast of a fallen race. She is the most resplendent orb in the scintillating galaxy of myriads of saints and angels. Like unto the angels in her incomparable purity, she towers above those celestial satellites in the splendor of her divine maternity. Like unto the saints in her human origin, she unites in a sublime manner in her own person all the virtues and perfections that adorn the array of saints, and by reason of her personal worth and dignity she lends a new and superior value to it all. Thus every perfection that is found in denizen of earth or of heaven discloses itself in the sublimest degree in Mary. Truly,

> And if our faith had given us nothing more,
> Than this example of all womanhood,
> So mild, so merciful, so strong, so good,
> So patient, peaceful, loyal, loving, pure,
> This were enough to prove it higher and truer
> Than all the creeds the world had known before.[8]

So intimately was Mary united to Jesus in every phase of His mortal life, that she has been styled co-Redemptress[9] of the world. Indeed, after God, we owe our salvation to Mary. The sublime humility shown in her consent sent a thrill throughout earth, a shudder through hell; and who can say what pæans of triumph rang out in heaven, as she uttered the words that shattered forever the shackles that had bound the human race: "Behold the handmaid of

[8] Longfellow, *Golden Legend.*

[9] Needless to say, this expression should be taken in a restricted and human sense.

the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word." [10]

Nor should we overlook the place which Mary occupies as Queen of martyrs. If she was the purest of virgins, never did mortal wear the crown of martyrdom more rightfully than did she who stood beneath the cross of Jesus. For the sufferings she endured when the words of Simeon were being verified — "thy own soul a sword shall pierce" [11] — were sufficient, from a natural viewpoint, to have caused her death, had not the divine assistance intervened.[12] The exquisite sensitiveness of her soul and her body made her a prey to the most excruciating mental and physical tortures imaginable. Veritably it was a sword of sorrow. While Jesus anguished and finally died upon the cross, Mary's compassion reached up to the very throne of God, and commingled in the vast sea of the divine sufferings. Never did martyr suffer so long or so intensely, for never did martyr so thoroughly penetrate the enormity of sin — the cause of Jesus' death — nor love the divine Victim with the tenderness or the all-consuming ardor of His Mother.

Hence, it is perfectly permissible to infer that the sufferings of Mary, in a way, tend to promote our salvation. Not that Mary of her own power could have satisfied the offended dignity of God, since He had decreed a divine Victim as a "propitiation for our sins, and for those of the whole world." [13] But since it is a matter of faith that we are assisted by the

[10] *Luke* i, 38.
[11] Ibid. ii, 35.
[12] This opinion is upheld by St. Anselm, St. Amedeus, St. Bernardine of Siena, and many others. Cf. De Vega, *Theolog. Mariana*, t. ii, n. 1252, seq. Ed. Naples, 1865.
[13] I *John* ii, 2.

prayers of the saints, it follows that the immense merits accumulated by the Blessed Virgin are of inestimable value before Almighty God with regard to the needs and necessities of sinful man. Greater weight is added to this if we reflect that Mary had no sin of her own for which to atone. It is not lawful to hold, however, that the satisfaction of the Blessed Virgin was independent of the merits of Christ, since He is the foundation and source of all merit and grace in the Church. In a secondary sense, therefore, it may be held that Mary by her co-operation and sufferings was a prominent factor in the work of Redemption.[14]

In the Treasury of merits in the Church we recognize the infinite satisfaction of the Savior as the cause of all the good that the Church represents. Besides this divine abundance, however, there are the merits and satisfactions of the saints, and pre-eminently of her who is nearest to God, and hence of proportionately more assistance to us than all other saints. The Redeemer is without doubt all-sufficient for man's every need; but the merits of those holy souls — His saints — acting in virtue of a communicated power, induce Him to apply His own divine merit to particular persons for whom they pray. If this be true of the friends of God, with far deeper significance is it verified with regard to His Mother. Her sublime dignity exerts an impetrative force, so to speak, in obtaining whatsoever she would for her clients. So powerful is she that in the words of St. Bernard, God "wished us to have all things through Mary." [15] St. Anselm explains it thus: "Thou art more powerful than all

[14] This is what theologians call *satisfactio de congruo.*
[15] *Serm. in Nativ.* B. M. V.

other saints and martyrs, for thou art their sovereign, since thou art the Mother of our Savior." [16]

As was befitting the Mother of the Redeemer she appears but seldom in the Gospel narrative. Jesus is the center of the sacred history. His relations to His Mother are clearly marked. We first get a glimpse of the holy Virgin when as still almost a child she is honored by one of heaven's ambassadors. Her consummate humility shines forth as remarkably as does her profound love of purity — a purity which seems to prefer the distinction of virginity to the honor of the divine maternity without the angelic virtue.

There is in the New Testament nothing concerning Mary which does not tend to elucidate some phase of the life of Jesus. Even her maternal fidelity at the foot of the cross serves to throw a peculiar light on the sufferings of the Savior, whose anguish is increased at sight of His innocent Mother, who represents to His dying gaze all that is noble and unstained in the race of men for whom He hangs in agony.

The exultant Magnificat is but the triumphant pæan of captive humanity rejoicing at the words of reprieve from eternal death — a reprieve to be purchased by the Divine Word with the consent and co-operation of His human Mother. Everywhere Mary appears to us identified with the life and work of her divine Son. Whilst admiring throngs gaze in rapt amazement at the marvelous power which this apparently humble artisan displays before men, Mary is unaffected by their vociferous applause. She does not come forward to claim a share in the honors heaped upon Him. Her's is a superior nature. She remains in the background, content to watch and study and admire the

[16] Orat xlvi, *ad Virg. Mariam.*

plan of redemption which God is unfolding before the world. Though she is conscious of her exalted dignity and prerogatives and of her intimate part in that wondrous work of salvation, no thought of self-complacency or of egotistic satisfaction finds lodgment in her maternal breast. Human emotions common to the ordinary individual are foreign to her refined and highly spiritualized nature. The fury of contending passions has never ruffled the heavenly, serene tranquillity that reigns in her soul. Nay, not the slightest, faintest breath of sinful origin has ever disturbed that holy calm which rises from the depths of divine grace wherewith her soul is flooded.

Thus with regard to that holy communion which binds together the threefold divisions of the Church of God, Mary stands alone in the greatness of her dignity, the quantity of her grace, and the eminence of her sanctity. The Baptist was sanctified in his mother's womb, but Mary was created holy. Other virgins have graced the Church with their purity: Mary was conceived in the loftiest state of purity. At the foot of the cross she confessed her God before all men; and standing on the crimsoned summit of Calvary she won a martyr's crown by her heroic fortitude which, aided by the grace of God, defied the natural powers of death. Thus in a most exalted sense the Blessed Virgin stands far above the grandest examples of sanctity and heroism the race has to offer. She excels each one in those very virtues in which they themselves are thought to surpass all others. The intense love of God which she infused into every action rendered that act supremely pleasing to God, and at the same time drew down upon her a wealth of grace and merit.

The Communion of Saints is thereby immeasura-

bly enriched by the vast merits of the Mother of God. The superabundant merits of Christ are of infinite value: but as a contributory cause of the sanctification of souls by means of impetratory intercession Mary far transcends the power of all the saints. Her intercession is of a higher order and of a more conciliating influence, since she stands before God as His Mother. The intercession of the saints rests upon their union with Jesus through charity; Mary's power, besides being more efficacious through her superior holiness and closer union to God, assumes a new phase by reason of the divine Maternity. In virtue of this prerogative her wish is almost a command.

This brief consideration discloses the reason why the saints and the faithful have ever been ardently devoted to the Mother of God. They felt and realized that to honor the Mother was to worship the Son, for He it was who made possible the stupendous heights of her greatness. Had not He also been the first to manifest toward her not only affection and love, but absolute subjection?[17] Could the artificer possibly take offense at the admiration bestowed upon his handiwork? Would the Son resent the homage paid to her whom He had so honored as to choose from all created beings as the intelligent medium for effecting the divine deliverance of the race from perdition? Rather would He punish the slightest want of deference and loyalty towards her whom He had elected to the most intimate relation known to a human creature. Whence appears the falseness of the assertion that our love of God is in the inverse ratio to our love of Mary: as if the former suffered diminution when confronted by the latter. Nay, as St. Theodore of the Studion

[17] *Luke* ii, 51.

remarks, "Since Mary became the temple of God made man, she is everywhere worshipped in her own shrines." [18] For, "thou dost excel the angels: since in thy arms thou holdest and gazest upon Him whom the angels fear to behold." [19]

Inspired by the spirit of Christ the Church has been ever mindful of His Mother. In her decrees, her councils, her liturgy, the teaching of her doctors, and the practices of her people, holy Church has inculcated the tenderest devotion towards the Mother of God. In the mind of the Fathers Mary is likened to the Church. "There is but one Virgin Mother," says the Alexandrian Clement: "I prefer to call her the Church." His reason is that the Church possesses the purity of a virgin, and at the same time the maternal love of a mother.[20] And St. Irenæus can find no more beautiful eulogy of Mary than the parallel which he draws with Eve. "As Eve was enticed by the voice of a bad angel to flee from God, Mary was taught by the good angel to seek God. Eve was persuaded to disobey; Mary, to obey. The Virgin Mary became the advocate for the virgin Eve. Eve's disobedience brought about man's ruin; Mary's obedience, his salvation." [21]

St. Ignatius also bears early testimony to the divine Maternity, when he declares that, "the Son of God who was begotten before all ages, was carried in the womb of Mary." [22] In refuting the heretics who denied Mary's prerogative he explains that three great mysteries were hidden from the prince of this world:

[18] *Carm.* xl.
[19] Id. *Carm.* xxxvii.
[20] *Paedagog.* i, c. vi. *P. G.* viii, 299.
[21] *Cont. Haeres.* l. v, c. 19. *P. G.* vii, 1175.
[22] *Ep. ad Ephes.*, n. 18. *P. G.* v, 659.

the virginity of Mary, the birth of Christ, and the Savior's death.[23]

The devotion to Mary was so bound up by natural and logical connection with the worship of Jesus that the two forms of veneration underwent similar trials, and shared glorious triumphs. The mother-love which shone forth in the character of the Virgin appealed to all classes of believers: they went to her in trustful confidence, mindful of her charitable solicitude at the wedding feast at Cana.[24] Jesus declares that His hour has not yet come, and yet He anticipates that hour in deference to the Mother whom He had chosen to obey. Her wish is for Him a command. This incident was impressed deeply upon the minds of the Christians, and it inspired them with unbounded faith in such powerful efficaciousness.

When praying to the martyrs and the servants of God the Christian could scarcely overlook that most potent source of impetration which was centered in the Mother of the Lord of the martyrs. Never for a moment did the Church falter in her devotion to Christ's Mother. True, her sacred name was assailed and her prerogatives were challenged by those heretics who denied the divinity of her Son. But as the servant is not above his master, so neither was the Mother above the Son. The Ebionites and their offshoots asserted that Jesus was simply the son of Joseph and Mary. But their baseless assumption that Christ was merely a man like other men, and that Joseph and Mary afterwards had other children, met with the strongest confutation on the part of the Church and the Fathers. Every vindication of Jesus was a triumph for Mary. The most solemn affirmation of be-

[23] L. c., n. 19. [24] *John* ii.

lief in the divine Maternity was pronounced when the Church, in the Council of Ephesus (431), declared that Christ was the Son of God, and Mary, His Mother. As if to atone for the blasphemies of heretics, the whole Christian world united in doing her homage. From this point a fresh impulse was given to the devotion towards heaven's Queen.

The Fathers of the first four centuries often spoke in the most eulogistic terms of God's Mother. The church in which the Ephesine Council convened was dedicated in her honor, and the people gave way to fervent outbursts of enthusiasm at the announcement of her vindication before the unbelieving. But it was reserved to future ages to develop to the highest degree the love and devotion which had their inception at the very cradle of Christianity.

With prophetic vision Mary had declared that all ages would unite in proclaiming her blessed. The Doctors of the East, with the poetic fervor and vivid imagery of expression peculiar to Oriental peoples, poured forth a wealth of love and affection and intense ardor in exalting the Great Mother. It is difficult to find anywhere more glowing effusions of burning devotion and rapt veneration than in the writings of these same Orientals. St. Germanus, St. Epiphanius, St. Sophronius, St. Tharasius, St. John Damascene, are a few names among the vast array of champions of Mary that stand out with a force that challenges the scorn of unbelievers and the timidity of the lukewarm.[25]

Nor was the Western mind slow to realize the glor-

[25] Father Passaglia S. J. has collected a vast number of beautiful passages from the Fathers. They are found in his large and well known work, *Commentarium de Immac. Deip. Conceptu, Romae,* 1864.

ies of Mary. A host of writers, all inspired by the deepest and purest love for the Virgin Mary, have left volumes of orations, poems, and treatises, exalting the virtues, the splendors, and the dignity of Mary. With the fire of enthusiasm that ever characterized him, St. Bernard seemed to surpass all others in the intensity of his fervor and the sublimity of his devotion to Mary. Not content with singing her praises on every possible occasion, he caused all the basilicas of the Cistercian order to be dedicated to her.[26]

Every age has witnessed a peculiar phase of the special devotion towards the Mother of God. Her divine Maternity was defended in the early periods of the faith. Her unsullied virginity has ever been the theme of poet and Doctor. Every age has asserted its belief in her Immaculate Conception, until this doctrine was raised to the dignity of a dogma of faith (1854).

In the thirteenth century the Church turned to Mary with all the vehemence of boundless love and renewed confidence. New religious organizations blossomed into being, animated by an intense desire to honor one or other of her prerogatives, or some phase of her life. Shrines in her honor were multiplied all over Europe. The faithful flocked annually to these centers of Mary's beneficence. She herself deigned to recognize this universal outpouring of faith and love, by appearing in various ways and under divers forms to many of her chosen clients, and encouraging them by favors and miraculous interventions to promote the glory of God and the propagation of the Gospel. Poets sang her glories in sweetest measures. Theologians delved into the depths of Scripture and of rea-

[26] Petrus Abb. Cellensis, *ep.* ccxiii, l. vi.

son, and drew therefrom new arguments and new glories that caused her name to be even more revered than before. Artists dedicated their talents to perpetuate their noble ideals of her beauty and splendor. Cathedrals, statues, paintings — the wonder and admiration of all succeeding generations — attested to the subserviency and docile faith of genius when pressed into her service.

Nor was this universal outpouring of faith and devoted service the mere effect of esthetic effusion. It materialized in a strengthening of piety, the conversion of the wayward, and in a general uplifting of religion. Among Christian nations faith was so strong and deep that whatever appealed to their belief reacted favorably upon their life and conduct. The old strain of fighting blood still flowed in the veins of Europe — a heritage from her barbarous ancestry. Civilization had failed to entirely eliminate that deep-seated tendency to avenge in blood insult and injury. Religion ever proved to be the most restraining check that could successfully be applied to that proclivity. The sufferings of Jesus and the love of Mary when held up on countless occasions to the gaze of the Christian peoples did more to restrain violent outbursts than could have been effected by sword or gibbet. It was this twofold spirit — love of Jesus and of Mary — as exemplified in St. Francis and St. Dominick, that curbed the fiery impulse to blood and revenge, and led the proudest spirits of the age to the altar of peace and reconciliation.

The extraordinarily large number of saints and holy persons during this period is directly traceable to this beneficent influence. Even a superficial knowledge of the hagiography of the period will convince one that

Jesus and Mary counted more captives of love and sanctity than was represented by the votaries of pleasure and of vengeance. We of the present age are often inclined to judge that particular epoch as distinctly an era of sanguinary feuds; it was, on the contrary, the harvest time of souls, as is attested by the lives of the Saints, not to mention the countless numbers who enrolled themselves in the various religious societies and organizations. Whatever may have been the failings and sins of the period it is beyond doubt that never before was the devotion to Mary more deep, more fervent, or more productive of good in the Church.

One of the saddest features of the unfortunate religious upheaval that soon followed was the entire elimination of Mary from the various schemes of reform. Some of the reformers endeavored to belittle the greatness of Jesus, and to this end they strove to minimize the prerogatives of His Mother. The disintegrating effect of Protestantism was but a natural sequence to this denial of the only one capable of leading them back to Jesus — Mary, the ever-glorious Mother of the Redeemer. The Communion of the Saints, in its earthly form, as presented by the new sectaries and devoid of its Queen, was but a flimsy, soulless, abbreviated shadow of a noble original. It were as vain to attempt to separate Mother from Son as truth from heaven. For Jesus the Son of God was born of Mary: and Mary is forevermore the Mother of God. It thus becomes impossible to believe in Jesus the Savior without admitting the divine Maternity of Mary.[27]

[27] As St. Athanasius says: "He who was born of the Virgin is King; He is also God and Lord. Wherefore the Mother who bore Him is rightfully called Queen and the Mother of God.

From the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, glorious is the name of Mary before all nations. Recognizing in her the most perfect work of God, the Church has ever looked upon her as our Mother. Sovereign Pontiffs have vied with one another in placing the approval of their authority on all legitimate means of honoring her. She herself has condescended to approve this loving devotion of her children by the most astounding miracles, not to mention the countless personal favors known to but a few. Yes, indeed, all nations do arise, and declare her blessed. In the words of St. Germanus: "Do thou be mindful of thy clients. Accept our prayers, strengthen our faith, gather all churches into the fold of unity, add splendor to the nation, diffuse peace throughout the earth, deliver all men from danger, and be thou our advocate at the day of judgment." [28]

It is therefore lawful for us so to style her when we turn to her and to the Son born of her flesh." *Evang. de SS. Deip.*, p. 425, op. ed. Paris, 1581.

[28] *Orat. de Don. Deip.*

CHAPTER VI

THE MARTYRS

With grief and gladness mix'd, the mother viewed
Her martyred offspring, and their race renewed.
— *Dryden.*[1]

The Roman world at the time of Christ was a new thing upon the earth. For the first time in the history of the world the nations of the earth, one and all, looked up to the central source of all power and authority in the mighty city on the banks of the Tiber. The tiny ripple on the political sea — a ripple that started not far from old Alba Longa — moving in concentric circles, had gradually spread, and grown in size, until with the resistless force of a tidal wave, it swept away from their moorings the lesser nations of earth, and engulfed them all in the seething vortex of the social maelstrom, whence emerged, dripping with the sweat of battle and conquest, the new Neptune that was to rule with inexorable rigor his restless but thoroughly subdued realm.

Never in the course of ages had the world witnessed such a sweeping triumph. Babylon, Assyria, Egypt, and Persia had loomed large and threatening in their day. The liberty-loving Greeks, instinct with the vital breath of freedom which they inhaled with the very air in their mountain fastnesses, rose up against

[1] *Hind and Panther.*

the Persian, smote him in their fury, and touched the apex of political power with no greater trophy to show than the unconquered banner of national independence. True, the nimble genius of Alexander, answering the spur of youthful impetuosity, swept the world from Thessaly to Indus — a brief season of conquest, a light that shone and flared for a dozen short years, and was quenched by the stifling fumes of dissipation.

These all were but child's play preliminary to the mighty drama that was even then beginning to unfold before the astounded gaze of mankind. The first act in this world tragedy came to an end with the consolidation of the Italian States under the power that had hurled the insolent Gaul from the Tarpeian heights. The next act witnessed the Roman eagle winging his untrammeled flight from the forests of Allemagne to the coast of Africa, and by a long swoop, from the chalk-cliffs of Albion to the uttermost bounds of the East. The sons of Romulus followed with the eye the track of the eagle, and the Roman broadsword hewed its victorious path through myriads of affrighted peoples until, Greek and Carthaginian, Briton, Gaul, and Teuton, together with the already effete nations of earth, bowed in obsequious worship before the mysterious *genius* that brooded within the circle of the Seven Hills.

During the period when Christ came out of Judea and taught His new and unheard-of doctrines to the startled but fascinated simple folk of Palestine, the third phase of this Roman drama was being enacted. The world as a prisoner had chafed at its chains, but the sullen clanking of the fetters announced that Rome had done her work but too well: the world was the

minion of Rome, henceforth it would exist simply to supply her with every means of gratification. Its vineyards, its mines, its granaries, wealth, and beauty were henceforth to furnish her with the pleasures of life. The brawn of the conquered peoples would slave and toil that Rome might play; their maidens and women would serve as the dancers, the entertainers, the toys of an hour, to relieve the growing ennui of the gilded aristocracy — degenerate and reprobate posterity of the brave days of old.

The religious beliefs of the prostrate nations, together with their material resources, were swept into Rome, there to become an object of ridicule and supercilious scorn — their gods to serve as scarecrows to frighten away birds and thieves.[2] With the influx of luxuries and the intoxication of power, purity and morals became an unattainable and undesirable ideal.

The disorganization of society occasioned by the horrors of civil war and proscription had tossed up into positions of affluence and power profligates of every ilk, and licentiousness reigned uncurbed. Well did Christ elect to diffuse the sweet purity of the doctrine of salvation first among the chosen people. For they alone with all their human falls and faithlessness were best fitted, or least unfit, to receive the message of redemption. He would instill His teaching into the hearts of a chosen few, would awaken the dormant faith of His people by the marvels He wrought, and would then send His trusted lieutenants into the various provinces of the empire to there preach, and ex-

[2] As Horace says of Priapus:

> . . . "Deus inde ego, furum aviumque
> Maxima formido."
>
> — L. i, *Sat.* viii.

hort, and win over the masses, the simple folk of other lands.

But the work would still be very incomplete so long as the citadel remained intact and free from invasion. Into this center of orgy and voluptuousness the intrepid Peter would penetrate, and would plant the ensign of redemption in the very halls of vice, nay, in the very palace of the imperial Cæsars.

"'Babylon!' Peter cries out, aghast at the depravity of Rome; and in that one name concentrates all his indignation and abhorrence." [3] All the virtues public and private that had formed the foundation of primitive Roman strength and greatness had now disappeared. Here and there, it is true, an exception was traceable, only to accentuate the enormity of the general depravity. Corruption in government, corruption in society, with morality at the very lowest ebb, were the present characteristics of this haughty people. Religious belief gone, the family life ignored, marriage sedulously avoided as an irksome burden, and easily solved when once entered into, there was need of a mighty stream of virtuous and spiritual reform to cleanse the Augean stables of putrid immorality, that on every hand emitted the intolerable stench of unbridled passions and wholly unrestrained debauchery. "Other ages may seem to be as prone to vice," says Fouard, "but there was never any so oblivious to virtue." [4]

The Stoics endeavored to inject their remedies into the social body, but putrefaction had already set in,

[3] Fouard, *St. Peter*, ch. xvi. This author paints a vivid and startling picture of Roman depravity at this time. It is startling in that it is founded entirely on facts, and therefore unquestioned.

[4] Op. and l. c.

and the remedy proved ineffectual in that it failed to reach a vital organ.

When St. Peter entered this vast arena he was unnoticed by all. His appeal at first was to the lowly and the wretched. St. Paul, by reason of his talents, education, and learning, was received by the leaders of the Synagogue, and then made an object of persecution by them when they discovered his affiliation with the hated sect of the Nazarenes.

As the Gospel became more known, the Romans themselves began to take cognizance of its presence in their midst. Appealing by its very nature to the poor, the downcast, and the slave, it soon attracted attention from their masters. Its high and ennobling conception of womanhood soon led it to recruit its ranks from the middle classes, and even from among the great ladies of the day.[5] The terrible degradation to which women were subject naturally facilitated their union with a creed which recognized them as man's equal, and thus safeguarded their virtue. True, many women cared not for such standards of purity. But there was still a goodly number who would have been faithful and upright had the proper influence and protection been extended in their regard. The fact that they now embraced the opportunity afforded them, tended to focus the attention of the sterner sex on the new religion. Some of the latter were won over, and openly defied public opinion and ridicule by professing a life of virtue and rectitude. We find the names of Pomponia Græcina and of members of the Senator

[5] In spite of the accusation often hurled by the pagans at the Christians that the latter were a crowd of beggars and old women, many members of the nobility are known to have professed the new belief. Cf. Fouard, *St. John and the Apostolic Age*, ch. ii–iii.

Pudens' family among some of the early converts. Gradually, as the new doctrine became known through its followers, the public became curious, then suspicious, finally hostile, as they viewed their own looseness of life thus openly condemned by the lives and words of these strange sectarians who believed in a crucified Leader.

Since the Roman laws permitted the votaries of foreign religions to worship as they saw fit — provided they kept within certain civil bounds — the Jews enjoyed this privilege in Rome at the advent there of Christianity. The followers of the Christ were looked upon by the Law as a branch of the Israelites. Whence we find the toleration extended to the new religion. The Jews, however, chafed under this indiscriminate classification, and so worked upon the feelings and ignorance of the magistrates and the authorities, that when Nero sought a victim to bear the ignominy of the burning of Rome, he seized upon the Christians as the cause of that terrible conflagration.

Christ had foretold that the Apostles would be witnesses to His teaching, that they would bear testimony not only in Jerusalem and in Judea, but to the uttermost bounds of the earth.[6] This testimony was not merely the bearing witness to the truth as is commonly done in a court of justice, where the witness is assured his personal security. Neither was it a mere recital of the doctrine and the miracles of the Savior for the edification or the instruction of the auditors. It was to be an open profession of faith in His teaching, of belief in His divinity, and of firm and unmovable adherence to His precepts, even to accepting the

[6] *Acts* i, 8.

alternative of death in preference to a denial of His doctrine. The term μάρτυς — witness — then began to take on a new significance. The Christian witness in testifying to his belief in Christ became a special kind of μάρτυρ: he was one who bore testimony of his faith even at the risk of his life; nay, even when certain that torture and death awaited his open profession.

When St. Peter declared himself a "witness of the sufferings of Christ," [7] he was not merely a witness in the sense that he had beheld these sufferings, but also inasmuch as he had openly professed his devotion to the sufferings of the Redeemer, as he exhorts the brethren in the same epistle: "If you partake of the sufferings of Christ, rejoice that when his glory shall be revealed you may also be glad with exceeding joy. If you be reproached for the name of Christ, you shall be blessed." [8] It was a testimony that reflects joy and peace in the heart of the witness, such as the Apostle of the gentiles spoke of. "Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity of heart and sincerity of God, and not in carnal wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conversed in this world." [9] This witnessing to faith in Christ might entail suffering and persecution, but the heart would remain steadfast. "In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed; we are straitened, but are not destitute; we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken; we are cast down, but we perish not; always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies." [10] Death itself would be powerless to shake that faith. "For we know, if our earthly house of this habitation be

[7] I *Peter* v, 1.
[8] I *Peter* iv, 13–4.
[9] II *Cor.* i, 12.
[10] II *Cor.* iv, 8–10.

dissolved, that we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven." [11] The body, therefore, might encounter physical dissolution, but the soul remained intact: "The Lord preserveth the souls of his saints, he will deliver them out of the hand of the sinner." [12]

Since the manner of union with the Christian faith was of various forms, or rather, since it entailed divers consequences, we find the term *martyr* used in the early Church in different ways. Thus Clement of Alexandria in the second century (†215), explaining the words of Christ in St. Matthew, about those who had left father, mother, and all things for the sake of Christ,[13] calls this renunciation, *martyrium gnosticum,* and the person thus acting he styles a *martyr.*[14] Here he reproves the heretics who despised the Christian martyrs, and proclaim it suicide to die for the name of Christ.[15]

They who underwent excessive tortures without death, were also styled martyrs. In this sense the three youths in the fiery furnace are called living martyrs, by St. Gregory of Nazianzen.[16] Christians in prison awaiting death for the faith are called martyrs, in view of their future suffering.[17] Since, however, the Latin, Confessor, is akin to the Greek μάρτυρ, we find the former term often reserved for those who had confessed the faith in the face of suffering, and had not undergone the extreme penalty.

[11] V, 1.
[12] *Ps.* xcvi, 10.
[13] *Matt.* xix, 29.
[14] *Strom.* iv, c. iv. *P. G.* viii, 1230.
[15] L. c. 1230–1.
[16] ζῶντες μάρτυρες, *Orat.* xx.
[17] Cf. v. g. Tertull. *Ad. Mart.* I: "Martyres in carcere pacem exorare." He styles *martyres designati* — elect — those who had been imprisoned for the faith, but not yet put to death.

Eusebius tells us that Apollonius, a Christian writer of the second century, wrote against the Montanists and their errors. Apollonius gives the true mark of a Confessor. "Themison," he says, "a man notorious for his avarice, did not bear cheerfully and patiently the cross of suffering — *which is the true mark of a confessor* — but obtained his release from prison by a large money bribe. Instead of then acting with humility and shame for his weakness, he boasted that he was a martyr and a witness of Christ. He then, imitating the Apostle, wrote a Catholic epistle to all the Churches, offering advice in matters of faith and religion to those who were evidently much firmer in their faith than he. He also used childish arguments to justify his conduct, and feared not to blaspheme against God, the Apostles, and Holy Church." [18] Apollonius also attacks the lives and crimes of other so-called martyrs.[19] In the third century, as Origen remarks, it became customary to style martyrs only those who had shed their blood for Christ.[20]

Considering martyrdom as a supreme act of faith, of courage, and of charity, ecclesiastical writers and doctors are wont to make various distinctions, and to emphasize certain conditions. Clement of Alexandria calls martyrdom, a consummation, "not because a man thereby reaches the end of his life, as others say, but because he thus shows forth a perfect and consummate work of charity." [21]

[18] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* l. c. v, xviii. Ed. Cologne, 1570.

[19] Ibid.—Tertullian also wrote a book against the Gnostics, heretics who denied the value or the necessity of martyrdom. Cf. *P. L.*, ii, 122.

[20] "Consuetudo invaluit ut solos eos martyres appellarent, qui sanguinis sui effusione pietatis mysterio testimonium perhiberent." *In Joan.*, t. ii. n. 8. *P. G.*, xii, 176–7.

[21] *Strom.* iv, c. iv. *P. G.*, viii, 1228. He adds, that in an in-

Lessius explains that there are various degrees of martyrdom. In the first place, he says, there is the martyrdom of infants, who without any use of reason or knowledge of the faith, lose their lives for the sake of Christ. Since they have not the use of their wills, nor the power of choosing life or death, the merits of Christ supply what is lacking to them. Hence the Church rightfully honors them as martyrs. The infants slain by order of Herod constitute the first-fruits of martyrdom, for by suffering for Christ they became members of the mystical body of the Church, and the want of will-power is supplemented by Christ, who is the Head of the body.[22]

As regards adults, he continues, the supreme act of martyrdom is that in which actual death occurs. For since the essence of the act consists in a loving profession of faith and confession of Christ, so long as life remains, there is still something lacking that that act may be said to be absolutely perfect. This was the heroic degree attained by all those who died for Christ.[23]

Then we find examples of saints who underwent sufferings and torments which of themselves were sufficient to cause death, but by an act of God were rendered less efficacious to destroy life. This also is a high degree of heroism.

Sometimes Almighty God so effectively intervened in the cause of His saints as to entirely destroy the force of the physical torments, so that the subject suffered not the slightest inconvenience. Thus it is re-

ferior sense, they who lead a pure life are martyrs, since, in a way, they spend their lives as they would shed their blood for the faith.

[22] *De Justitia et Jure*, l. iii, c. i, dub. ii, n. 12.

[23] L. c. dub. iii, n. 12.

lated of St. John the Apostle who, as tradition has it, was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, and by the divine help escaped unharmed. In this manner not only is full testimony rendered to the faith, but from a certain viewpoint, the strength of the testimony is enhanced, since God thus openly approves of the truth of the faith which His servant professes.[24]

It is necessary, moreover, that the will consent to the suffering, even though there exist a certain natural and physical repugnance to pain; for if a person were put to death, and his will refused consent to this open confession of religion, one of the chief elements of true martyrdom would be entirely wanting. Much the same thing happens in baptism, were a person to be baptized against his will, or when deprived of the use of reason.

In a word, true martyrdom must proceed from love of God, and not from human vanity or pride.

A question might arise as to whether heretics dying for their belief which they hold to be true, should be accounted true martyrs. The answer often has been given by the Fathers, that no one dying outside the true faith can rightfully be called a martyr.[25] For such persons suffer death for what actually is error, even though in their own minds it may appear the truth.

"Not even blood can wash away the stain of heresy," says St. Cyprian.[26] And St. Irenæus says

[24] L. c.

[25] St. Cyprian vigorously denies the title of martyr to any heretic. "Baptism of fire avails not such an one, if he die outside the Church." *Ep. ad Jubaian. P. L.* iii, 1168. "They may give up their lives in fire, or to the wild beasts; it will be not a crown of glory, but the penalty of perfidy." *De Unit. Eccl.*, n. 14. "He may be killed; he cannot be crowned." Ibid.

[26] L. c.

that true martyrs are found only in the Catholic Church;[27] for since there is but one true faith, there can be but one true martyrdom.

St. Augustine, commenting on the words of the thirty-fourth psalm,[28] says: "Be attentive, O Lord, not to my suffering, but to my cause, not to that which is common to me as well as to the criminal, but to that which I have in common with the blessed who suffer for the sake of justice: for this cause it is which makes the difference; since suffering is the same in the good and in the bad. Wherefore not the punishment but the cause it is which makes the martyr."[29] This idea he repeats in many places, always insisting on the cause, as the real essential element of martyrdom.[30]

It is to be noted that a person dying for the faith renders testimony forever for that faith, even in regard to articles not yet defined. For by his sacrifice he is joined irrevocably to the Church. On the other hand, they who during their lives have denied points of doctrine not yet clearly and officially defined, and have continued to adhere to the infallible authority of

[27] *Adv. Haeres.* iv, c. ix. P. G. vii, 1078. St. Cyprian emphasizes this. "Esse martyr non potest, qui in Ecclesia non est." L. c.

[28] *Ps.* xxxiv, 23. "Arise, and be attentive to my judgment: to my cause, my God and my Lord."

[29] "Non in poenam meam, sed in causam meam; non in id quod mecum habet latro commune, sed in illud quod beati, *qui persecutionem patiuntur propter justitiam.* Haec enim causa discreta est. Nam poena similis est et bonis et malis. Itaque martyres non facit poena, sed causa." *Serm.* ii, *in Ps.* xxxiv. *P. L.* xxxvi, 340.

[30] He places the following words in the mouth of the martyr: "They may have the same punishment, but not the same cause. They may suffer the same as I: they suffer not for the same cause. . . . It is the cause, not the suffering which makes the martyr." *Serm.* cccxxvii, n. 1. Cf. also *De Bapt.* iv, 17., and *Serm.* ii, *De S. Vincent.*

the Church, cannot be said to have sealed error in their blood. Thus of St. Cyprian in his controversy with Pope Stephen about rebaptizing heretics, St. Augustine says that he is confident the saint's martyrdom atoned in blood for whatever excess he may have been guilty of in this regard.[31]

Death therefore in itself is no index of either truth or error, as Suarez remarks.[32] Membership in the true faith it is which distinguishes the Christian martyr from the follower of falsehood and error. And St. Cyprian speaking of the heretics of his time says, as observed above, that not even blood can efface error, that is, error in faith.[33] He adds that they who thus die outside the true fold receive the punishment of their faithlessness, not the crown of faith.[34]

It is interesting to insert here, apropos of the subject, a Protestant estimate of Foxe's martyrs. Dr. James Gairdner says: "Foxe's aim, then, was to discredit what he called 'the Pope's Church,' by glorifying all who had suffered for the opposition to it during the two centuries before he wrote. Opposition to Rome was to him always a proof of sanctity; and whoever had suffered for his antagonism to the Pope or the Romish Clergy was for that very reason exalted to the dignity of a saint or martyr. Nay, more, a man might be guilty of simple felony and hanged as a felon by civil law; yet, if his object had been only by some outrage to attack superstition he was sure of a good place in Foxe's narrative." "Men who strongly upheld and men who strongly denied the Real Presence

[31] *De Bapt.*
[32] *Def. Fid. Cath.* i, l. i, c. 20.
[33] L. c.
[34] *Ibid.* Tertullian calls martyria, *fidei examinatoria. Scorp.* vii. *P. L.* ii, 136.

in the Sacrament are here found in the same holy company." [35]

Many heretics of early times went to the opposite extremes on the subject of martyrdom. Some, as the Gnostics, the Basilidians, the Valentinians, denying that Jesus Christ had really suffered, ridiculed and scorned the idea of suffering, much less, dying for Christ. Others, on the contrary, as the Montanists and the Donatists, actuated by a strange fanaticism, went eagerly in search of martyrdom. Men of the stamp of Cerinthus rejected the martyrs with hatred and execration, and then did honor to Judas.[36]

Basilides, one of the early Alexandrian Gnostics,[37] entertained novel ideas in religion, holding among other erratic opinions, that Christ did not die, but that Simon of Cyrene changed form with Christ on the way to Calvary, and thus Simon was crucified, whilst Christ returned to the Father.[38] He asserted moreover that the Christians were rightfully punished for their sins, thus eliminating the noblest qualities in the martyr — faith and intense love of God. Clement of Alexandria refutes him, in the *Stromata,* adding that: "If martyrdom be a mere retaliation for sin, so also is faith the same, for it is on account of faith that a man undergoes martyrdom." [39]

Clement shows the fortitude of the martyrs by referring to a remark made by Zeno. This philosopher speaking of the doctrine of the Indian seers on patience in suffering, said he would rather behold one Indian roasted to death, than to hear all the arguments of

[35] *Lollardy and the Reformation in England,* t. i, p. 338.
[36] Tillemont, *Mém.* ii, p. 27.
[37] First half of II century.
[38] Cf. *Cath. Encyclop.* s. v. *Basilides.*
[39] *Strom.* iv, 12.

their philosophers on patience. Clement observes: "We have daily large numbers of martyrs who before our very eyes are roasted to death, tormented in various ways, and beheaded." [40]

So great was the honor of martyrdom that we find many seeking it of their own accord.[41] The man who had, without dying, suffered for the faith, was forever after an object of veneration, as we see in the case of the martyrs, or confessors, of Lyons, and many others. If he gave his life for the faith, he became the center of a cultus, or special worship of dulia. Hence, it is not strange that some there were who sought this honor. In order, however, to guard the true from the false, the Church and the Fathers always discountenanced the actions of those who went in search of death. There was danger that these presumptuous beings might be led on by human pride, and thus weaken in their torments, and so draw discredit upon themselves and their religion.[42]

St. Gregory Nazianzen lays down this rule: "The law of martyrdom demands that we neither rush headlong into the conflict, thus safeguarding the weak; nor avoid the combat, when once we are in the fray. The former course is rashness, the latter, cowardice." [43]

The necessity of this policy was not only theoretical, but founded upon actual experiences. Thus, in the

[40] *Strom.* ii, 20.

[41] "When we have learned not to fear death, we begin to love martyrdom." St. Cyprian, *De Mortal.*, n. 16. He consoles those who regret being deprived of the grace of martyrdom. "It is not in your power, but in the mercy of God." Ibid., n. 17.

[42] The Apostolic Constitutions speak of this: "Let us not hasten rashly into danger, for our Lord says: 'pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak' (*Matt.* xxvi, 41). If we are seized, let us not stain our confession by timidity." *Lib.* v, c. v. Mansi, i, 410.

[43] *Hom. in Basil.* (Orat. 43, c. vi).

letter of the Church of Smyrna, we read of a Christian who boldly presented himself before the judges; and at sight of the wild beasts, he trembled with fear, and turned apostate.[44]

The Council of Elvira (about 303) decreed that the honors of martyrdom should be refused to those who had recklessly broken in pieces the pagan idols, thus inciting the pagans on to fury and revenge.[45] Clement of Alexandria likens such audacity to that of a person who teases a wild beast, and thus dies, the victim of his own temerity.[46] Later on, the Council of Carthage (349), striking at a similar abuse in Africa, principally among the Donatists and other heretics, refuses the appellation, martyr, to such as were guilty of this rashness.[47]

It is true that we read of the examples of saintly persons who in certain circumstances felt impelled to thus display their faith before the world: the ordinary Christian ran too great a risk of apostacy by such a course.

St. Augustine speaking of those Christian women who cast themselves into the river and were drowned rather than suffer detriment to their chastity at the hands of their pagan persecutors, says: "I will not dare judge them rashly. For what if they did this inspired by God, and not from human motives?" He shows the plausibility of this reasoning, and yet warns all to beware lest they be deceived as to the inspiration

[44] Cap. iv. *P. G.* v, 1031. The Letter adds: "For this reason we do not praise those who voluntarily present themselves."

[45] "Si quis idola fregerit, et ibidem fuerit occisus . . . placuit in numerum eum non recipi martyrum." *Can.* lx, Mansi, ii, 15.

[46] *Strom.* iv, 10. In another place he says that such persons are to be treated like ordinary public criminals. Op. c. cap. iv.

[47] *Can.* ii. Conc. Carthag. I.— Mansi, iii, 145. He assigns this Council to 348.

which they claim for such conduct.[48] His idea, therefore, is that a person must be on his guard concerning this. St. Ambrose speaks of a like case where Pelagia, with her mother and sisters, did a similar thing.[49] And Eusebius mentions many Christian women who preferred death to becoming victims to the lust of Maxentius.[50]

The honor in which the martyr was held was frequently recognized by the pagans themselves. They would often torture a Christian without putting him to death, and thus frustrate, as they thought, any attempt on the part of his brethren to worship him. This method was in great vogue under Julian the Apostate, who repeatedly acted as in the case of young Romanus. Julian had condemned a number of Christians to be beheaded. As Romanus, the youngest of them, knelt to receive the blow, a messenger arrived with orders to spare their lives, and to send them into exile. Thus Julian hoped to deprive these holy persons of the glory of martyrdom, which he fully understood.[51]

The legal trial to which the martyr was subject was a very simple affair. He was asked if he would renounce the Christ and sacrifice to the emperor or to the gods. Upon his refusal, he was condemned to death, or in some cases, as under Julian, the punishment was the terrible *damnatus ad metalla* — con-

[48] *De Civ. Dei*, i, 26.
[49] *De Virginibus*, iii, c. vii. *P. L.* xvi, 229.
[50] *De Vita Constant.* i, 27–8. Ed. cit.
[51] Theodoret. *H. E.* iii, c. 16. Ed. Cologne, 1570. We read of a certain philosopher, Peregrine by name, who after his conversion was placed in prison. He conducted himself with such hauteur and constancy that the governor of Syria freed him. He afterwards turned apostate, and leaped into a funeral pyre, lighted by his own hand, hoping thus to leave behind him a glorious name. Lucian, apud Tillemont, *Mém.*, t. ii, p. 78–84.

demned to the mines. Frequently the sufferings of these Christians before being brought to trial were extremely severe. As a rule the pagans enjoyed the privilege of delation: they were encouraged to become informers. They simply reported a suspect, and the unfortunate victim was either haled into court at once, or what was worse, cast into a loathsome prison, where everything tended to render him as miserable as possible. Hunger, congested quarters, and all the squalor attendant upon the most nauseating conditions were designed to weaken his faith. But to the glory of the early Church be it recorded that comparatively few weakened under this severe test. In the case of Christians of rank and eminence we often find the judges extending leniency towards them, entreating them to reconsider their decision, and appealing to every human sentiment — love of wealth, power, luxury, friends, family, life — in order to shake the constancy of the prisoner, a constancy which the magistrates attributed to stubborn fanaticism.

Subsequent to their condemnation the martyrs were put to the torture in many ways: they were stoned, cut asunder, crushed between two mill stones, flayed and lacerated. Some were crucified, or beheaded, or with heavy weights attached to them, cast into the sea, or hurled from a precipice. Others were hung up by the thumbs, and remained thus suspended for days at a time. Some were suspended head downwards over a slow, green wood fire, and suffocated by the smoke. Women and maidens were frequently given over to the vile passions of the lowest degenerates — a fate which they dreaded far more than death, and which they often avoided by a voluntary death, as we saw above from Eusebius. The martyrs, in a word, " were

racked, not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection. And others had trial of mockeries and stripes, moreover also of bands and prisons. They were stoned, they were cut asunder, they were tempted, they were put to death by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being in want, distressed, afflicted: of whom the world was not worthy: wandering in deserts, in mountains, and in dens, and in caves of the earth." [52]

One of the favorite methods of punishment was to expose them helpless in the arena. The sports of the amphitheater held an intense fascination for the pagans. Their brutalized passions revelled in scenes of bloodshed where human beings were the participants. Slaves, gladiators, Christians, all served the same purpose, to glut the popular craving for blood. The element of true sportsmanship was entirely lacking in the debased method of tossing before the infuriated, half-famished beasts, innocent men and women who refused to defend themselves, but calmly awaited death. It pointed to the wretched depravity of the audience, and the noble disdain and superhuman heroism of the martyrs. What a frightful state of ferocity and inhumanity is there not revealed in a populace that could enjoy and a ruler who could sanction a scene like that witnessed when the holy old man Polycarp is thrown like so much carrion before the fell denizens of the jungle! The greater, however, the torments, and the more unequal the contest, the more luminously did the light of Christ shine out as a beacon on a benighted world. Christ found the race engulfed in vice and steeped in iniquity. He sowed the seed of the Gospel broadcast: the blood of the mar-

[52] *Heb.* xi, 35–8.

tyrs fell as moisture from heaven upon that seed, and the God of heaven gave the increase. The harvest was abundant. The better elements of paganism were continually drawn by the example of the martyrs to confess the Christ, and the Church increased in numbers and in heroism before God and man. As St. Augustine exclaimed: "The earth is filled with martyrs. The seed was sown in blood, and the harvest of the Church grew apace." [53]

Paganism was disintegrating. The warlike valor of Rome had spent itself under the first Cæsars. Retrogression had set in. Corruption social, moral, political, religious, was fast weakening the foundations of the structure, and Rome needed but the strong hand of a younger and more vigorous people to pull down on her very head the vast edifice which had been so long building. The year 476 was a long way off, it is true, and in the meantime Rome amused herself with the various enjoyments of profligate old age. Incapacitated for the purer pleasures of sane living, she wallowed in the mire of debauchery, and besotted, body and soul, heart and mind, she gave herself up to the most shameful excesses, and the wanton cruelty of doting age.

Against this lurid background the martyr stood forth as a resplendent figure. His integrity, courage, and loyalty to his God were a reproach to the reckless mockers of the gods. The modest, pure maiden, who possessed still the power to blush at evil, was an eloquent denunciation of a vice-ridden people, who gloried in and boasted of the most bestial lecherous-

[53] "Pro ipsis idolis adversus nomen Christi repleta est terra martyribus. Sparsum est semen sanguinis, surrexit seges ecclesiae." *Serm.* xxii, de 3 v. ps. 67.

ness. The comparison was so startling, the condemnation so evident, the rebuke so stinging, that with un-Roman cowardice they found voice for but one cry: The Christians to the lions! They would blot out from sight that living execration of their unbridled and untamed lust; they would bury the Christian in the depths of the sea, in the hidden recesses of the earth, in the capacious maw of the lion and the tiger. But in vain. They were sowing the wind, to reap shortly afterward the whirlwind. It took the blood of a God to redeem the race from perdition, and it required the blood of myriads of pure men and women, nay, and of children, to conquer for God the conquerors of the world. For "in the martyr is summed up every quality that goes to form the moral greatness of man: strength of character, undaunted courage, ardent love of truth, a magnanimous scorn for things of earth, nobility of soul, and heroism in the sublimest degree: a greatness that could calmly exclaim: 'This is the truth, and for this I die.'" [54]

This lofty estimate of the martyr is not simply the result of a magnifying power of admiration enhanced by distance. The personal courage displayed by those heroes struck the gaze of their contemporaries and on occasions drew forth the sympathy and praise of the pagans themselves. When Nero insisted on putting to death numbers of innocent Christians, the pagans re-

[54] "Nel martire si compendiano tutte quelle doti che formano la grandezza morale dell' uomo, la fermezza incrollabile del carattere, il coraggio più invincibile, l'amore più ardente della verità, il disprezzo più magnanimo di tutti insieme i beni della terra, l'altezza somma dell'animo, in breve, l'eroismo nella sua forma più sublime. Che potete mai trovare di più grande nell'ordine morale d'un uomo, che tranquillamente dice: 'Questa è la verità e per essa io muoio'!" Bonamelli, *Gesu Cristo Dio-Uomo*. Confer. xvi, p. 329.

volted at this useless and unwonted cruelty towards perfectly harmless men; nay, they attributed this slaughter to the frenzy of Nero himself, without the least shred of public policy to justify it.[55] So also under Domitian, the people arose against the tyrant when, after putting to death countless members of the aristocracy, he struck at the lower classes in his endeavor to reach the Christians. Juvenal tells us that the emperor might strike securely at the upper classes, and obliterate some of the noblest men and women of Rome. His doom was sealed the moment he attempted to invade the ranks of the workingmen.[56] This working class counted a vast number of Christians. Domitian's suspicions were aroused on seeing their intimacy with the patricians, and he at once scented treachery and conspiracy. Hence, his hand fell heavily upon the lower as well as upon the higher classes.[57]

As we have observed before, the martyr was surrounded with a peculiar halo of reverence by the faithful. This veneration was based upon a twofold principle. In the first place, suffering and death for the sake of one's conviction is always sure to arouse admiration in any fair-minded breast. "It is a truth universally accepted," remarks Cicero, "that patient endurance of suffering is the mark of an heroic nature. Nor is there a man who would not adjudge such an one worthy of all encomium."[58] "Death, the final penalty, has no terrors for a true man," says Lucan,[59] the

[55] "Quanquam adversus sontes et novissima exempla meritos, miseratio oriebatur, tanquam non utilitate publica, sed in saevitiam unius, absumerentur." Tacitus, *Annal.* xv, 44.

[56] Juvenal, *Sat.* iv, 154.

[57] Cf. Fouard, *St. John* (Eng. tr.), p. 67.

[58] Cicero, *Tusc.* ii, 18.

[59] "Mors ultima poena est, nec metuenda viris." L. viii, *Bell. Civil.*

Roman poet. The enervated sensibilities of the populace often failed to appreciate this courage in the hated Christian; but even the sturdy barrier of deep-rooted prejudice was forced in time to give way before the irresistible power of heroic deeds. Lactantius mentions this when he chides the Romans for their obtuseness in blindly setting themselves against the truth attested by the martyrs. "When from the rising to the setting of the sun the law of God is everywhere received, and every age, and people, and country, and both sexes, serve God in unity and equality — when everywhere is witnessed the same long-suffering, the same contempt for death — they should have realized that there must be some great truth concealed therein, which the Christian defended with his life; that there must be some solid basis to this belief, which did not yield, nay, which actually thrived under the weight of insult and injury. When the people beheld men torn asunder with every kind of torment, and remain patient, when even the executioner was tired out, they concluded truthfully that such magnanimity of purpose, such unwavering perseverance of a vast multitude, could not well be understood without God." [60]

When on the other hand, the Christians looked upon the martyrs not only as witnesses to a noble ideal but as actual companions and comrades in the same struggle and for the same principles which they themselves upheld, their admiration became a devotion that soon rose to the sublime height of an inferior worship. "The Christian people," says St. Augustine, "with religious earnestness celebrates the memory of the martyrs, both to arouse imitation, as well as to share in their merits and to enjoy the assistance of their

[60] Lactantius, *Institut adv. Gent.* v, c. 13. *P. L.* vi, 590.

prayers. Still, we do not erect altars to the martyrs, but simply to God in their honor. For when did a priest, standing at the altar in the midst of the holy bodies of the martyrs, ever say: We sacrifice to thee, Peter, or Paul, or Cyprian?" [61]

The dignity reached by these valiant defenders of the faith is touched upon by St. Gregory Nazianzen, where he remarks beautifully that the martyrs "suffered ignominiously that they might honor the Word of God, and repay blood for Blood." [62] This complete and perfect confession rendered them peculiarly an object of veneration. Their sufferings were thought to enable them to obtain whatsoever they asked of God. Hence, as an illustration, we read of the confessor Donatus. He had been in prison six years, and had at nine different times been put to the torture. Whilst he was again in prison, Lactantius addresses him: "Do thou, dearest Donatus, since thou meritest to be heard by God, do thou implore the Lord, that in His mercy and love, He preserve His servants forever; and that He keep far from His people all the snares and assaults of the devil." [63]

The custom of applying to the martyrs in prison for their intercession in the case of apostates, is too well known to here need a long recital. So universal was the faith in the efficacy of impetration of the confessor awaiting trial, that at times some of the people went to extreme lengths, and the simple-minded not unfrequently fell into the error of believing that the pardon they received was given in the name of the martyr, and not that of the Father, Son, and Holy

[61] *Cont. Faust.* l. xx, c. 21.
[62] This whole chapter will well repay a careful perusal.
[63] *De Mort. Persecut.* c. lii. *P. L.* vii, 274.

Ghost. Tertullian refers to those who being deprived of the peace of the Church, had recourse to the martyrs.[64] Now, the letters they received were generally of an intercessory nature. Hence, when abuses afterwards arose, and the apostates clamored for these letters, the Church decreed that all such letters should be presented to the Bishop. If he approved of them, he then gave the penitent what were called, *literae communicatoriae*, a sort of ratification of the former.[65] This was done to prevent a breach of discipline in the Church; since it often happened that the penitents, relying upon the power of the martyrs, demanded as a right that the Bishop re-admit them into the Church. This whole procedure pointed conclusively to the profound respect and veneration which the Church entertained for her children in prison.[66]

Among those who were ardently devoted to the memory of the martyrs, none other, perhaps, was more conspicuous than St. Damasus (304–384). Elected Pope in 366, he used his supreme authority, and employed his poetic talent, to celebrate the glory of these heroes. He built several churches and restored others, in their honor. He likewise made many artistic restorations in the Roman Catacombs. It was at this time that Furius Dionysius Filocalus flourished. He was the friend of Damasus, and popularized the artistic form of lettering called after him, Filocalian. In spite of the various heresies and disturbances that

[64] "Pacem quidam in Ecclesia non habentes, a martyribus in carcere exorare consueverunt." *Ad. Martyr.*

[65] Cf. Counc. Laodic., *can.* ix; and Counc Liberit., *can.* xxvi.

[66] There were three kinds of letters. (a) *Literae confessoriae*, to free from further penance those condemned thereto. This was always on the supposition of the bishop's consent. (b) *Literae pacis*, similar to the former. (c) *Literae communicatoriae*, given by the bishop only.

marked his pontificate, Damasus found time to write a number of epitaphs in verse for the tombs of the principal martyrs. Filocalus engraved these inscriptions in his peculiar lapidary style, and together they form at the present day one of the most beautiful, as well as one of the most important collections that ancient Christian epigraphy has transmitted to us. The various dogmas of the faith are touched upon by the poet-pontiff in a masterly and forceful manner. There is scarcely a cemetery in Rome but has a Damasan inscription, showing his piety and faith. The peculiar spirit of the epitaphs is one of childlike love and devotion towards the martyrs. The one relating to St. Agnes has been given above. It reflects the spirit of the others.

In the Cemetery of St. Calistus the Chapel of the Popes (so-called by reason of the number of Popes interred there) was decorated and embellished by St. Damasus. A beautiful dedicatory inscription in Filocalian characters was written by him and placed there. It runs as follows:

HIC CONGESTA IACET QVAERIS SI TVRBA PIORVM
CORPORA SANCTORVM RETINENT VENERANDA SEPVLCRA
SVBLIMES ANIMAS RAPVIT SIBI REGIA COELI
HIC COMITES XYSTI PORTANT QVI EX HOSTE TROPAEA
HIC NVMERVS PROCERVM SERVAT QVI ALTARIA CHRISTI
HIC POSITVS LONGA VIXIT QVI IN PACE SACERDOS
HIC CONFESSORES SANCTI QVOS GRAECIA MISIT
HIC IVVENES PVERIQVE SENES CASTIQVE NEPOTES
QVIS MAGE VIRGINEVM PLACVIT RETINERE PVDOREM
HIC FATEOR DAMASVS VOLVI MEA CONDERE MEMBRA
SED CINERES TIMVI SANCTOS VEXARE PIORVM.

Here lie the mortal remains of a large number of saints. These hallowed crypts contain their holy bodies. Their noble souls took their flight to heaven. Here the companions of Xystus triumphantly returned from the combat.[67] Here the prelates who do duty around the altar of Christ. Here lies the priest who beheld the longed-for peace.[68] Here are the noble champions whom Greece sent forth.[69] Here rest the youths, the children, the chaste souls whom love of virtue made victors.[70] Here, I confess, I Damasus, wished to lie buried, but I feared to disturb the sacred repose of the saints.[71]

In regard to the martyrs, the belief of the early Church was that their souls went immediately to heaven. True, some of the Fathers seem to have held the opinion that after death the souls awaited the judgment, and that their possession of ultimate bliss was dependent upon the final judgment;[72] but this may easily refer, in many cases, to the perfect happiness which would ensue upon the reunion of soul and body. The martyrs, however, went straight to heaven. As St. Cyprian says: "It is an insult to a martyr to pray for him."[73] St. Augustine later on echoes this sentiment: "The custom of the Church is to mention the names of the martyrs at the altar of God; not to pray for them, as for the other departed. For it is an insult to a martyr to pray for him, to whom we ought rather to recommend ourselves."[74]

[67] Pope Sixtus II and his deacons.
[68] Pope St. Melchiades (311–14).
[69] Referring to the bodies of some Greek martyrs, in a nearby *arenarium*.
[70] All the countless unnamed martyrs in the catacombs.
[71] Note the humility and reverence of the holy pontiff.—Marucchi, *Guide*, p. 145.
[72] Cf. Luckock for some passages. *The Intermediate State*, chap. ii.
[73] "Injuriam facit martyri qui orat pro eo." *Ad Martyr.*
[74] "Habet ecclesiastica disciplina, quod fideles norunt, cum

We see from this also that it was customary to make mention of the martyrs during the divine service. This usage afterwards resolved itself into the practice of saying two Masses on Sunday and the principal feasts: one Mass of the day, the other of the martyr.[75] Besides this, the Acts of the Martyrs often were read in church. These Acts had been compiled by notaries of the Church, and many of them were destroyed under Diocletian. Afterwards new compilations appeared under the name, *Passionaria*.[76] They were well known and much in use from early times. By reason of the destruction under Diocletian it happened in the course of time, that traditions of uncertain authenticity were often woven into plausible accounts, and gave rise to many so-called Spurious Acts. These were suppressed at various periods, and their reading in the church forbidden.[77]

Still, each church preserved its own lists of saints and martyrs, and this was called a Calendar, or Martyrology. These lists, or parts of them, were sometimes sent to other churches, and not unfrequently

martyres eo loco recitantur ad altare Dei, ubi non pro ipsis oretur: pro ceteris autem commemoratis defunctis oratur. Injuria enim est pro martyre orare, cujus nos debemus orationibus commendari." *Serm.* clix, 1. Cf. also *Serm.* ccxcvii, n. 3.

[75] "Before the fourth century the Mass celebrated in the cemeteries, and afterwards in the basilicas, was the ordinary Mass of the day, with a commemoration, at most, of the holy martyrs. Later on, if the anniversary fell on Sunday or on a festival of Our Lord, two Masses were said, one De die, as we say now, the other, of the Saint. Thus, on Christmas day there were two Masses in honor of this mystery, and a third one in honor of St. Anastasia." Magani, op. c. i, 266.

[76] There is a decree of uncertain authority attributed to Pope Gelasius, in which it is noted that these Acts were not read in the Roman Churches. Cf. Migne, *P. L.* lx, 174. As regards the Acts, etc., cf. Magani, op. c. ii, 65–68. Also St. Aug. *Serm.* cccxv, n. 1, and cclxxx, n. 1. *P. L.* xxxviii.

[77] Cf. CATH. ENCYCLOP. *Martyrs, Acts of.*

found their way into the list of another church. The various local Calendars were afterwards united, and thus gave rise to the first collective, or general Martyrologies. The best known of these was perhaps the one erroneously attributed to St. Jerome, and called the Hieronymian. In later times the names of holy bishops, and of saintly confessors, virgins, and others were added to the Martyrology.

The devotion to the martyrs was apparent especially in the Catacombs. When the mangled remains of the hero were interred in the *loculus*, a soulful prayer was wafted to the holy martyr. Faith in their power of intercession was boundless.[78] The following from St. Cyriaca's cemetery is an ordinary example:

CVIQVE PRO VITAE SVAE TESTIMONIO
SANCTI MARTYRES APVD DEVM ET CHRISTVM
ERVNT ADVOCATI.[79]

Fortified by the sacrifice of their life, the holy martyrs will intercede for each one before God and Christ.

MARTYRES SANCTI
IN MENTE HAVITE
MARIA (*sic*).[80]

Holy Martyrs, be mindful of Mary.

Everything connected with the memory of the martyrs was held sacred. Their relics, their shrines, their lives, words, and deeds, were all sources of edification. What is more, it became customary to perpetuate this remembrance in another and a peculiar way, and that was by giving their names to the newly baptized.[81]

[78] This subject will be reviewed in chapter on Pilgrimages.
[79] Marucchi, *Eléments*, etc., i, 185.
[80] Op. c., p. 186.
[81] Eusebius, *H. E.* viii, 21. Ed. c.

The study of Christian names reveals a deep devotional phase of the early Church.[82] By assuming the name of a martyr a person was, so to say, enrolled under his protection. This name was an ever present reminder of the virtues of the original, and it served to stimulate the possessor with renewed courage in the trials undergone for the faith. Just as the free-born Roman, with his three names,[83] often added a fourth, in honor of some victory or event, so the Christian, with a higher motive, added a new name, or more often, changed his pagan name to that of a martyr.[84] The latter thus became a champion and protector of his client. This custom was in full vigor throughout Christendom until the Renaissance and the Reformation, when a resurrected paganism exacted its toll, even in names, from a people who knew not the martyrs of old.[85]

Towns, societies, gilds, and in general, all organizations of men gloried in a patron saint, as did the individual. The mediæval spirit is thus unfolded by Montalembert.

[82] It was customary to consecrate children to the martyrs. Hence the expression, "*Nutricatus Deo Christo martyribus.*" Prudentius refers to this custom.

> Videmus illustres domos
> Sexu ex utroque nobiles
> Offerre votis pignora
> Clarissimorum liberum.
> Vittatus olim Pontifex
> Ascitur in signum crucis,
> Aedemque, Laurenti, tuam
> Vestalis intrat Claudia.
>
> — *Peristeph.* hym. ii.

[83] Called, *praenomen, nomen, cognomen.* The fourth was called *agnomen*, as Africanus, etc.

[84] Eusebius, l. c. We often find the proper name, *Martyrius.*

[85] At the time of the Renaissance, "In christening their children the great families abandoned the Saint of the Calendar, and chose names from mythology." Symonds, *Revival of Learning*, p. 396.

"During the ages of faith, heaven and earth seemed very close together. Men lived in a sort of tender and intimate familiarity with those of their ancestors in the faith whom God had called hence, and whose sanctity had been approved by the Church. Thus was formed that mental affection, that trustful patronage, which bound in harmonious union the saints in glory with the humble pilgrims still struggling in the Church militant. Every man chose a father, a friend, amongst the denizens of Paradise, and under their guidance he worked faithfully towards the same goal. From the king and the Pope down to the humblest believer, each one had his celestial patron. In time of danger, in battle, in trouble of all kinds, the effect of this heavenly friendship manifested itself in a sweet confidence and an unfailing consolation. Thus men came to cherish in this world those whom they hoped one day to know and to love in the life to come." [86]

With regard to the efficacy of martyrdom in cleansing the soul from sin, there seems to be no doubt in the minds of the early Fathers, nor in the teaching of the Church.[87] If "greater love than this no man hath, than that a man lay down his life for his friends," [88] the martyr who seals in his blood that faith which he has not yet formally professed in baptism, will surely receive the remission of all sin — of both guilt and penalty. The later writers with St. Thomas [89] receive and develop this doctrine which

[86] *Life of St. Elizabeth*, Introd. (from Ital. ed.). Witness the devotion still shown to patron saints in Catholic countries, not to mention the almost universal celebration of the name of St. Patrick.

[87] "Videtur ergo martyrium esse expurgatio peccatorum cum gloria." Clem. Alex. *Strom.* iv, 9.

[88] *John* xv, 13.

[89] *Sum. Theol.* iii, q. lxviii, a. ii.

they have recognized as bearing the genuine stamp of antiquity.

In fact, Origen speaking of sin and its remedies says: "The second remission (*of sin*) is in martyrdom." [90] Elsewhere he goes further, and adds that in a certain sense, baptism of blood is far preferable to that of water. For after the latter, one may still sin, whilst the baptism of martyrdom renders one impeccable.[91] Commenting on St. Matthew, he calls martyrdom, baptism,[92] and explains that in true martyrdom sin is remitted, since, "Every one that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven." [93]

Although St. Cyprian repudiated those who arrogantly boasted that martyrdom destroys all sin, and who thus seemed to flout the authority of the Church,[94] he holds the same doctrine as Origen; for he admits that such catechumens are "baptized most gloriously in the shedding of their blood." [95]

St. Cyril says the same thing. "Without baptism no man can be saved, excepting the martyrs, who gain heaven without baptism of water. For from the wounded side of the Savior there flowed water and blood, signifying the two kinds of baptism, in time of peace, and in persecution." [96]

The West is also ably represented by St. Augustine, who without hesitation affirms: "He who dies for Christ, even without baptism, receives the same re-

[90] *In Levit.* hom. ii, n. 3. *P. G.* xii, 418.
[91] *Hom.* vii, *in Judic.* Cf. Dodwell, *De Secundo martyrii bapt.*, in Migne, *P. L.* iv, 1157–88.
[92] *In Matt. t.* xvi, n. 6.
[93] *Matt.* x, 32. Cf. also *Exhort. ad Mart.*, n. 28.
[94] *De Lapsis*, n. 4. *P. L.* iii, 884.
[95] Ep. 73, *ad Jubaianum*, n. 22. *P. L.* iii, 1170.
[96] Cyril Hier. *Catech.* iii, n. 10. *P. G.* xxxiii, 439.

mission of sin as if he had been washed in the cleansing waters of baptism." [97]

The basic reason of this fact is this: death suffered for the sake of Christ, constitutes a sacrifice, a testimony, so complete that it touches the apex of perfect love; and thus it drives out of the soul all that is inconsistent with this heroic state of charity. It is a veritable baptism — a cleansing — but by fire, instead of by water.[98]

The final resting place of the martyr was ever a loadstone, attracting the piety of the devout, and focusing the chief forms of worship towards the saint about his tomb. The sepulcher of the more prominent among the martyrs was under the altar.[99] One reason for this was that the faithful might thus be reminded to pray to him, and to manifest various acts of veneration towards him. This resting place was called the *Martyrium*, or Confession. Hence, the Church of the Resurrection on Mt. Calvary was called, Martyrium.[100] Amongst the Latins, the Confession was the tomb alone with the altar over it,[101] whilst

[97] "Quicumque etiam non percepto regenerationis lavacro, pro Christi confessione moriuntur, tantum eis valet ad dimittenda peccata, quantum si abluerentur sacro fonte baptismatis." *De Civ. Dei*, xiii, 7. Cf. St. Jerome, *in Ps.* xxxi.

[98] St Cyprian says: "Can baptism be more efficacious than this open confession in which one is baptized in his own blood?" *Ep. ad Jub.* l. c.

[99] St. Maximus says that the martyrs are placed under the altar, as their appropriate resting place, since Christ their Leader is placed above in the Holy Eucharist. *Serm.* lxxvii. *P. L.* lvii, 690.

[100] Cyril, *Cat.* 14, n. 7, *P. G.* xxxiii, 831. Thus the Greeks called the Church of an Apostle, ἀποστολεία, of a virgin, παρθενῶνας, etc.

[101] On the word *Confession*, Mgr. Gaume remarks: "Admirable nom donné par le génie chrétien à l'autel des martyrs; car il rappelle que le témoin de la foi lui a rendu le plus irrécusable de tous les témoignages, le témoignage du sang." *Les trois Rome*, t. i, p. 202 — 4 ed. The church built over the tomb was

among the Greeks the Martyrium often indicated the whole church.

As we shall see when speaking of Pilgrimages and Shrines, the tomb of the Saint was looked upon as the surest protection of the city. Prudentius, in mentioning the tomb of St. Agnes at Rome, declares this:

SERVAT SALUTEM VIRGO QUIRITIUM:
NECNON ET IPSOS PROTEGIT ADVENAS,
PURO AC FIDELI PECTORE SUPPLICES.[102]

The Holy Virgin watches over the welfare of the Romans. Nay, she shields even the stranger who invokes her with pure and humble heart.

The most celebrated of these tombs were those of St. John, at Ephesus, and of Sts. Peter and Paul, in Rome. "From all quarters men flocked to the Sacred City (Rome): believers, to refresh their Faith at the tombs of the martyrs; the hesitating, to seek there the Arbiter who should strengthen their convictions, and the light which should dissipate their doubts."[103] In the same way did the sepulcher of the martyr become the chief center of faith and piety in each community.

So deeply rooted was the devotion towards the martyrs that the believer wished after death to be buried near the tomb of his heavenly protector. This desire is discernible in the earliest times. It appears in the expressions, *Ad sancta martura, ad Domnum Cornelium,* etc. It shines forth in the ardor shown in the third and fourth centuries, as well as in later times,

often called, *Memoria.* S. Optatus says of Sts. Peter and Paul: "Ibi Romae sunt duorum memoriae apostolorum."—*De Schism. Donat.* l. ii.

[102] Περὶ Στεφάνων, *hym.* xiv, 4–6. *P. L.* lx, 581.

[103] Fouard, *St. John and the Apostolic Age,* p. 240. Ed. c.

to obtain the right of sepulture near those sacred remains. St. Paulinus remarks complacently that Celsus was buried,

> . . . PROPINQUIS
> CONJUNCTUM TUMULI FOEDERE MARTYRIBUS;
> UT DE VICINO SANCTORUM SANGUINE DUCAT
> QUO NOSTRAS ILLO PURGET IN IGNE ANIMAS.[104]

The idea uppermost in the minds of the faithful was that propinquity to the hallowed resting place of the martyrs not only insured the remembrance of the survivors, but also communicated a certain share in the honor bestowed upon the champions of the faith, and was of spiritual benefit to their own souls. In the multitude the notion often prevailed that this closeness to the martyrs placed them in a special way under the protection of the saints. It was a sort of silent and tacit invocation of the blessed. Sometimes, it is true, an exaggerated idea of the value of such burial is seen among the simple; but it only points to the fundamental principle, that the faithful prized highly such a place of interment, and that they thereby manifested a deep and abiding love for the martyrs.

St. Paulinus, the friend of St. Augustine, granted a certain lady named Flora, the privilege of burying her son in the Church of St. Felix, at Nola. St. Paulinus then wrote to the Bishop of Hippo, asking him if burial in the Church of the Martyrs, or near their graves, is of particular benefit to the dead who there lie buried. St Augustine answered him with the book, on "Care for the Dead."[105]

The holy doctor treats the question of prayer for

[104] *De Obitu Celsi*, v. 605–8. *P. L.* xxiii, 689.
[105] *De Cura Gerenda pro Mortuis.*

the dead, recommending the practice, and expatiating on its efficacy. He then speaks in detail on the subject which prompted his answer. I give a synopsis of his opinion.

He says that it is a sign of affection towards the dead to select a burial place for them near the tombs of the martyrs. "But since the living require such means to sustain their love for the dead, I do not see just what benefit thereby accrues to the departed, excepting that, mindful of the sacred place where their dead repose, the living recommend them to the patronage of those holy men before the Lord.[106] This, however, they could do, whether they buried their deceased friends there or not." [107]

He then goes on to solve the question explicitly. "If this pious mother desired to have the body of her son interred in the basilica, and thought that thereby he would share in the merits of the martyr, this belief was, in a sense, a supplication. This pious aspiration might possibly be profitable to her son. Since, therefore, she often reverts in spirit to this holy place, and thus prays for her son, it is evident that not the place itself, but rather the prayer of the pious mother is beneficial to him. . . . Still, even if she be frustrated in her desire to obtain such sepulcher for him, she should not cease to pray for his soul." [108]

Later on, St. Maximus, of Turin, explained this in much the same way, adding that in this holy company we escape the pains of hell, provided we were companions in the virtues of the saints.[109]

[106] St. Anselm gives the same reason. *Elucidarium*, in op. t. iii, p. 268. Ed. 1573.

[107] Op. c. cap. iv.

[108] C. v.

[109] "Cum sanctis ergo martyribus quiescentes evadamus inferi

In spite of such a privilege we see men like St. Damasus fearing to thus place themselves on an equality with the martyrs.[110] St. Ephrem, of Syria, in his last will, charges his friends: "Permit not that my remains be placed in the house of God, or beneath the altar. I say this not through contempt for the saints, but because the number and enormity of my sins terrifies me." [111]

Nevertheless, the custom remained in vogue for many centuries. Burial near the body of St. Peter in Rome was reserved for popes and holy men. The emperors were sometimes buried in the outer vestibule. St. John Chrysostom refers to this when he says that, "at the tomb of the humble fisherman (St. Peter), the emperors hold the position generally assigned to the door-keepers in the imperial palace." [112] Some of the old Saxon kings also were interred there.

As might be expected, abuses here and there arose, wealthy Christians sometimes endeavoring to buy the privilege, and at other times, the clergy setting a price upon it. Thus, St. Gregory the Great reprimands the Bishop of Cagliari (in Sardinia), for having exacted a certain large amount from a prominent lady named Nereida, who had her daughter buried in the church.[113]

In England so great did the number become of those seeking burial in the churches, that the bishops were forced to use severity in repressing the abuse. They observed that the churches were intended as places

tenebras, eorum propriis meritis, attamen consocii sanctitate." *Hom.* lxxxi *in Natal. SS. Octav.*, etc. *P. L.* lvii, 428.

[110] Cf. p. 23, last two lines.

[111] Quoted by Muzzarelli, *Il buon uso della Logica*, ecc. p. 142.

[112] *Hom.* xxvi *in II Cor.*

[113] L ix, *ep.* iii, *ad Januar.* St. Gregory does not mention the burial in Church, but it is inferred from the tone of the letter.

of prayer for the living, not as depositories for the dead. Public service was ordered discontinued in those churches polluted by an indiscriminate interment of all classes of people.[114]

The martyrs therefore were ever objects of special veneration both by the Church acting in her official capacity, and by individual Christians. Whatever differences of opinion we find in the early ages as to the immediate reception of the saints into heaven, the belief was general that the martyers entered at once into their heavenly joy. As a result, the living recommended themselves to those heavenly beings even more fervently than did the fallen beg the prayers of the confessors in prison. The Church Militant, moreover, did everything to honor the remembrance of her valiant children; everything connected with their memory was prized. Relics, shrines, pilgrimages, hymns, festivals, all attest to the fact that the death of the martyrs was precious in the sight of their brethren as well as in the sight of heaven.

[114] Lingard, *Antiquities*, etc., chap. vii, n. 2.

CHAPTER VII

THE ANGELS

. . . Ne' duo penultimi tripudi
Principati ed arcangeli si girano;
L'ultimo è tutto d'angelici ludi.

— *Dante.*[1]

It is well known that God often acts through secondary or instrumental causes. He disposes all things sweetly and powerfully, but frequently makes use of created objects in order to attain His end. With regal authority He dispatches His messengers to the uttermost bounds of creation. In dealing with men He often accentuates the importance of this relation by charging a heavenly spirit with the high mission of acquainting man with the will of heaven. Thus, at the fall of man, God sent a messenger from on high to chastise His guilty creature, and at the same time to extend a promise of mercy and future forgiveness. Also when the time came to redeem that promise one of the celestial hierarchy bears the glad tidings of salvation and redemption to a disgraced and fallen race. These special messengers have been called Angels.[2] This term is not explanatory of their nature, but simply indicative of their office, since it signifies

[1] . . . Princedoms and Archangels, with glad round
To tread their festal ring; and last, the band
Angelical, disporting in their spheres.

— *Paradiso*, c. xxviii.

[2] Ἄγγελοι.

ambassador, or one sent as a messenger (מלאך *malach*).

In the Old Testament these messengers appear on many occasions. Their existence is proven by their numerous apparitions, and by the inspired Word of God. They frequently appear to men under a great variety of circumstances. They were known by various names. Job mentions them as the "sons of God."[3] The Psalmist often calls them "spirits."[4] They are the "host of heaven,"[5] "the Saints,"[6] and so on. The New Testament has frequent reference to them and to their office among men.

The very early Fathers of the Church do not appear to have written much in regard to the Angels. They take their existence for granted under the light of Revelation. In the third century the inquisitive mind of Origen (†253) sought to determine something more definite about these spirits. He speaks of them on various occasions, and in one of his works, considering the creation of the world, he says: It is clear "that there are Angels, good spirits, who minister unto God for the salvation of men; but it is not very clear as to when they were created."[7] Later on he considers the question more intimately. God is ever active, he says, and is ever displaying His power and goodness. "Just as God did not first begin to act when He created this world, so after the destruction of the present there will follow another world. Thus we believe that before the present there were other worlds."[8] Hence, in his opinion, the Angels, belong-

[3] I, 6.
[4] *Ps.* ciii, 4.
[5] II *Esdra* ix, 6.
[6] *Dan.* viii, 13.
[7] *De Princip.* I. *P. G.* xi, 120–1.
[8] Op. c. iii, c. v, n. 3.

ing to the other world, were created before the present one. The Eastern Fathers cautiously admitted the creation of the Angels before this world, but they either rejected or doubted the statement that other worlds existed before.[9]

In the West, St. Augustine, treating of this point, seems to doubt, and rather inclines to the belief that the Angels were created simultaneously with the world.[10] St. Gregory holds the same view.[11] The Church, however, has defined the question by declaring that the Angels were created, and that this took place before the creation of man.[12]

The number of these blessed spirits is naturally a matter of pure conjecture. Nevertheless from the tone of Scripture we glean that their number must be immense.[13] The Fathers and later writers adhere to the same opinion. Some even give a more or less arbitrary explanation to the parable of the lost sheep. They say that the one lost sheep represents the human race; the ninety and nine, the Angelic host.[14] Hence the relative numerical preponderance of the Angels.

As regards the Angelic names there are but three disclosed to us in the authentic Scriptures: Gabriel Dan. ix, 21); Raphael (Tob. iii, 25); Michael (Dan, xii, 1). Apocryphal and later poetic works invented many others; these naturally have not been received by the Church.

Concerning the nature of the Angels, theology, following up the letter and the sense of Holy Writ, gives

[9] Cf. exhaustive article by Bareille, *Dict. de Théolog.* i, s. v. *Anges.* Paris, 1903.
[10] *De Civ.* xi, 33.
[11] *Moral.* xxxii, 16.
[12] IV *Conc. Lateran.* (1215) Decree, *Firmiter,* Mansi, xxii, 981.
[13] *Apoc.* v, 2; *Dan.* vii, 10; *Matth.* xxvi, 53, etc.
[14] *Dict. de Théol.* l. c.

a fairly accurate portrayal. In the first place we learn that, although appearing frequently in corporal form, they are spirits. "Who makest thy Angels spirits." [15] This does not preclude the possibility of assuming corporal shape in appearing to men, since this is the only way in which we can, in our present state, perceive them. Hence in Holy Writ they ever appear pervious to the senses. Neither are they composed of body and soul, but are spirits of a purely intellectual nature. They differ one from the other not as man from man, but as one species from another, since each Angel constitutes a whole, separate, and distinct species. Thus they also exclude material relations, and are above and independent of all material conditions of time and space. St. Thomas argues this fact from the perfection of the universe. For since God wished His creation to be perfect, He established beings representing the various orders of perfection. These orders extend from the inanimate creature possessing neither sense nor life, up to man endowed not only with organic life but with the light of reason and intellect. In order that this gradation be perfect and comprehend a higher and nobler likeness to God, it is meet that there be intellectual beings unencumbered with material grossness, creatures who reflect in a more intimate sense the spiritual nature of God Himself.[16]

The Angels therefore are pure, intelligent spirits, not subject to change or death, as is man. For since these Angelic spirits are not composed of material elements which may be separated one from the other, they are exempt from that change which in material creatures is called death, or destruction. Still, they

[15] *Ps.* ciii, 4. [16] *Sum. Theolog.* i, q. l, a. i.

are not eternal, but like all creatures were created by God. "For in Him were all things created in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers." [17]

On the other hand they are superior to man, for "Thou hast made him a little less than the Angels." This superiority consists chiefly in the fact that the Angelic nature is more highly and more perfectly intellectual than is the nature of man.[18]

One result of this pre-eminence is found in the relations they bear towards humanity. Although not created principally to serve man, they nevertheless assume an important rôle in God's relations to us. In the first place, they act as helpers and assistants to us on the path of virtue. For they are "all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation." [19] Now this is not a mere honorary title, but an office fraught with the weightiest consequences. We are given to understand in the Bible that they are placed over kingdoms and peoples. Daniel relates how the "prince of the kingdom of the Persians" [20] resisted him; this is understood by the Fathers as indicating the guardian Angel of the Persian kingdom. So also in Zacharias: "These are they whom the Lord hath sent to walk through the earth."

Moreover, it is the belief of the Fathers, recognized by the Church,[21] that each individual has a particular

[17] *Col.* i, 16.
[18] *Sum. Th.* i, 93, 3.
[19] *Heb.* i, 14.
[20] *Dan.* x, 13.— Cf. verse 20.— This duty of watching over kingdoms is thought by some to belong to Principalities.— Cf. Tirimus, *Com.* in h. l. vers. 13, *Zach.* i, 10.
[21] On the second of October the Church commemorates the Guardian Angels.

Angel guardian. While this cannot perhaps be proven directly from Scripture, the oft-repeated sentiment of the sacred writers points unmistakably to this conclusion. "He hath given His Angels charge over thee," [22] the Psalmist assures the just man. When St. Peter through Angelic assistance, escaped from prison, and appeared at the house of Mary, the mother of John, the maiden who answered his knock was ridiculed for her apparent credulity. They told her: "It is his Angel." [23] This expression points indubitably to the belief in individual protectors. Our Lord seems to confirm this by referring to the same belief: "Their Angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven." [24] St. Jerome expands this by adding: "So great is the dignity of our souls, that from birth each one has an Angel Guardian." [25] And St. Ambrose remarks casually: "We should pray to the Angels who have been given to us as Guardians." [26]

That these holy spirits faithfully discharge their duty towards us, it were superfluous to prove. Holy Writ is replete with examples of their solicitude. "When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead . . . I offered thy prayers to the Lord," [27] Raphael assured Tobias. "I will send my Angel . . . if thou wilt hear his voice . . . I will be an enemy to thy enemies." [28] The Angel in Zacharias (i, 12) prays for the people: "O Lord of hosts, how long wilt

[22] *Ps.* xc, 11.
[23] *Acts* xii, 15.
[24] *Matth.* xviii, 10. Cf. *Gen.* xlviii, 16.
[25] Com. in *Matth.* ii.— St. Thomas also holds this; i, 113, 5.— Origen is unjustly accused of denying this. He speaks of Angel Guardians in *De Princip.* ii, 7.
[26] *De Viduis,* ix. *P. L.* xvi, 251.
[27] *Tob.* xii, 12.
[28] *Exod.* xxiii, 20.

Thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Juda, with which Thou hast been angry?" Judith ascribes her success and her preservation to the Angel: "His Angel hath been my keeper both going hence, and abiding there, and returning hither." [29]

On a larger scale they form a distinct part in the government of the world by Divine Providence. The Old Testament furnishes many instances of intervention in their peculiar rôle as messengers or ambassadors. After the fall, Cherubim with flaming swords guard the entrance to paradise. The Angels treat with Lot before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha. The Jews attributed many occurrences to Angelic intervention. The signal given by God to David to attack his enemies was a rustling in the tree-tops caused by an Angel.[30] An Angel is sent to destroy Jerusalem.[31] The Angels in the Apocalypse play a prominent part in the affairs of men with regard to God.

On the other hand, we see many accounts of the work of the evil Angels, who endeavor to thwart the work of God among men. They are permitted to act within certain bounds. Almighty God allows them for wise reasons to afflict the sons of men, as in the case of Job. St. Michael and Satan are represented as leading the contending forces of good and evil. Satan "was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth." [32] He is over the "empire of death," [33] and his ambition is to drag down to eternal

[29] *Jud.* xiii, 20. Tertullian reproves a disrespectful attitude in prayer since, "the Angel assists at our prayer." *De Orat.* xvi.
[30] I *Paral.* xiv, 15.
[31] L. c. xxi, 15. *Num.* xxii, 22.
[32] *John* viii, 44.
[33] *Heb.* ii, 14.

death those who fear God. He and his Angels are hardened in evil, and for them there is no redemption. Christ could give no more terrible picture of the world than to call Satan its prince. "The moral and religious condition of that age," says Döllinger, "explains why Satan is named Prince of this world. He appears as one hardened in fixed contradiction and irreconcilable enmity against God, a spirit that hates all good, whose kingdom is everywhere thwarting, destroying, and tempting to apostasy the kingdom of God." [34] In this work he is assisted by the myriads whom he drew after him in his fall, and who are united for the destruction of all good in the world. Their inferiority, however, is ever manifest as regards both God and the good Angels. After Satan had dared to tempt Christ, Angels came to minister unto Him. Their protection and efficacy shine forth in the story of the young Tobias.

The Church has always sanctioned the healthy, sound doctrine of the worship of the Angels. True, St. Paul reprobates the false teachers of his time for trying to seduce the faithful by preaching the "religion of angels." [35] He refers here to the sacrifices offered to Angels instead of to God.[36] The Essenes also held peculiar ideas regarding the Angels.[37] In the course of time other heretics erred on this question. Celsus held that the worship of Angels was simply an adaptation from paganism; since, he said, the Angels were the demons adored by pagans.[38] Origen refutes

[34] *The First Age of the Church*, p. 172–3 — 4 ed.
[35] *Col.* ii, 18.
[36] Cerinthus taught that the Angels were greater than Christ, and that they had created the world.— Baronius, an. 60.
[37] Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* ii.
[38] Origen, *Cont. Celsum*, viii, 13.

him, adding that, "not only the priest but the Angels too, pray with those who rightly pray." [39] St. Justin affords similar testimony that we are permitted to worship the Angels.[40] Jacob demands a blessing from the Angel; [41] Daniel, Josue, and others worshipped those heavenly spirits.

A decree of the council of Laodicea (IV century) is often objected against this cultus. The thirty-fifth canon declares that: "It must not be tolerated that Christians should leave the Church of God and go away, and invoke the Angels." [42] The plain meaning of the inhibition is that Christians are forbidden to offer divine honors to Angels, as heretics had attempted to do. The canon appears clear if read in conjunction with the thirty-fourth, where it is likewise forbidden, "to desert the Martyrs and to go to false, that is, heretical ones." The obvious conclusion is, that Christians are to adhere to the true and to shun the false worship of Angels and Martyrs.[43]

In the eighth century a heretic named Adalbert flourished for a brief season. He endeavored to disseminate false ideas on angelology. The apocryphal names of Angels were introduced into his system; but he was opposed by St. Boniface, and finally condemned by Pope Zacharias in a Roman synod (746).[44] Modern writers in their endeavors to impeach the veracity of Scripture have often attempted to identify

[39] *De Orat.* ii.
[40] *Apolog.* i, 6 — cf. also Newman, *Develop.* ch. x, sect. i, § 3.
[41] *Gen.* xxxii, 26.
[42] Mansi, ii, 569. This council probably belongs to the latter half of the IV century.
[43] Cf. Bellarm. *De Beatif* SS. i, 20; *Theodoret in Dan.* iv.
[44] Natal. Alex. *H. E.* Saec. viii, c. 2, a. ii. Adalbert used to pray to Angels Uriel, Raguel, Tubuel, Inias, Tubuas, Sabaoch, Simiel.

the Angels of the Bible with the various spirits, genii, *sukalli,* and other fictitious beings of mythology. The comparison, however, between Angels and the denizens of the Roman, Persian, or Babylonian worlds of spiritual existence shows the absurdity of the insinuation.[45]

According to patristic angelology the blessed spirits have been divided into the nine orders mentioned in Holy Writ. Besides the Angels who appear so frequently in the sacred pages, we have Archangels (I Thess. iv, 15), Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominations (Eph. i, 21), Thrones (Col. i, 6), Cherubim (Exod. xxv, 22), Seraphim (Isaias vi, 2). St. Thomas following the author of the work on the *Celestial Hierarchy,* subdivides these orders into three classes in the order named. For this division he suggests reasons drawn from Nature.[46] St. Gregory, who speaks at length of these classes of spirits, assigns the following attributes to each. The Angels announce ordinary matters, the Archangels, extraordinary; Principalities preside over the good Angels and their works; Powers restrain excessive temptations from evil spirits to man; miracles occur through the instrumentality of Virtues; Dominations exercise a transcendent power over Principalities; Thrones assist at the divine judgments; Cherubim possess a vast knowledge, and behold God with surpassing clearness; Seraphim are the nearest to the divine throne, and thrill with ecstatic bliss through their intense love of God.[47] This Gregorian classification of attributes may be considered somewhat arbitrary, but it has been

[45] Cf. *Dict. Théol.* s. v. *Anges.*— Pope, in *Cath. Encyclop.* s. v. *Angel*

[46] *Sum. Theolog.* i, 108, 5.

[47] *In Evangel.* hom. xxxiv, n. 10. *P. L.* lxxvi, 1251.

accepted by many writers and theologians as at least plausible. Dante seems to have utilized this ninefold division to great effect, where he describes the nine circles about the throne of God.

> Thus swift
> Follow their hoops, in likeness to the point,
> Near as they can, approaching; and they can
> The more, the loftier their vision.[48]

The absence of a special cult towards the Angels in the first three centuries would not excite our amazement. For the pagan mind was not yet spiritually matured to appreciate the distinction between an Angelic spirit and a mere god of heathendom. Moreover, the indescribable confusion occasioned by the vagaries of the Gnostics with their countless spiritual eons,[49] tended to cloud the minds of believers themselves, unless guided by superior knowledge and authority. Despite this twofold danger there are evidences of the antiquity of this cult. Origen and several other Fathers have been quoted. One of the early apologists, Athenagoras, explaining the divinity of the three Persons of the blessed Trinity, adds: "We recognize also a multitude of Angels, whom God the Author of the world ordained through His Word to preside over the elements, the heavens, the world, and all things in it." [50] A sanctuary built near Byzantium and called the *Michaelion,* was ascribed to the emperor Constantine. St. Michael was believed to have appeared there; and the many miracles wrought in the same

[48] *Paradiso,* c. xxviii.

[49] Leclercq says that the ridiculous fecundity of these eons resembled that of microbes.— *Dict. d'Archéol.* s. v. *Anges,* n. 17.

[50] *Legat. pro Christianis,* x. *P. G.* vi, 910. Cf. Theodoret. *Graec. Aff. Cur. P. G.* lxxxiii, 889.

place at his intercession lent confirmation to the belief. Sozomenus, the historian, testifies to having received great favors at this shrine.[51]

As in the case of many other doctrines, the fourth century witnessed a general development and expansion along this line. The Fathers speak openly of this and other tenets of belief. As soon as the mist of heresy has cleared, the light of the true doctrine shines forth with intensified splendor.

Eusebius of Cæsarea remarks that below God, "there are certain beings of an incorporeal nature, intelligent, and endowed with tremendous power, Through the gracious condescension of the Father, many of these celestial creatures are sent to man. We have been taught to know and to venerate these spirits according to their dignity, reserving the worship of adoration to God alone."[52] He observes also that there are many evil spirits who ever plot harm and destruction to men.[53]

Even before this time, despite the scarcity of testimony, due to the dangers from heretics, we find explicit mention in the writings of Hermas. He speaks frequently of Angels and of their offices and ministrations. He calls St. Michael "the good and noble envoy, who has power over this people and governs them,"[54] thus indicating the attitude of the ordinary believer in that early period. He shows how the angelic hosts are subordinate the one to the other.[55] What is also remarkable is the fact that he refers explicitly to the Angel guardian, and foreshadows

[51] Soz. *H. E.* ii, 3. *P. G.* lxvii, 940.
[52] Euseb. Pamph. *Dem. Evang.* iii, 3. *P. G.* xxii, 193.
[53] L. c.
[54] Pastor, *Simil.* viii, 3. *P. G.* ii, 974.
[55] *Vis.* iii, 4.

the teaching of later Fathers. Each man has two spirits on attendance: "one of justice, the other of iniquity." The good spirit is "mild, modest, meek, and peaceful; he speaks within thee of justice, of purity, of charity, and of chastity . . . believe thou him and his works." [56] The evil spirit on the contrary is painted in the light of an enemy of all that the good angel stands for.[57]

Leclercq shows how in the earliest times St. Michael and the good Angels were invoked in the litanies, and, indeed, immediately after the Blessed Trinity. He quotes from De Rossi an inscription found in a church of Umbria, in which the Almighty is referred to as the "God of the Angels." [58]

Theodoret, the historian, calls attention to certain oratories in Pisidia and Phrygia, dedicated to St. Michael, and used by the heretics in their unlawful worship of Angels.[59] This heretical devotion was condemned in the Council of Laodicea.[60] St. Augustine also is obliged to use caution in speaking of the worship of Angels, as he tells us that emphatically we do not erect altars for the purpose of worshipping — with latria — any creature, either angel or man.[61]

The devotion to the Angels became so fixed a part of Christian worship that in subsequent ages it attained the highest development; while the veneration towards St. Michael assumed a particular phase all its own, inasmuch as he has ever been considered the patron of the Universal Church.

[56] *Mandat.* vi, 2.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Leclercq, *Dict. d'Arch. Chrét* i, 2 p. page 2147. *SCS* Deus Angelorum qui fecit resurrectionem.
[59] *In Colos.* ii, 18. *P. G.* lxxxii, 613.
[60] *Can.* xxxv. Mansi II, 580.
[61] *C. Faust.* xx, 21.

In the words of the great Doctor of Hippo, "we form with them one city of God, to whom it is said in the psalm: 'Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God.' One part of this city is still on pilgrimage, that is ourselves: the other, represented by the Angels, stretches out a helping hand to us." [62]

[62] *De Civ. Dei*, x, 7.

PART II

VENERATION OF SAINTS

CHAPTER I

THE VENERATION OF HOLY RELICS

We honor the Relics of the Martyrs, that we may thereby worship Him who is the Head of the Martyrs.
— *St. Jerome.*[1]

If it is permissible to worship the Saints with that inferior homage which we call *dulia,* there is no legitimate reason to militate against the veneration of their mortal remains. From the very moment that this homage manifested towards the Relics of the Saints departed is understood to be entirely relative, every mist of rational doubt must of necessity disappear. A Relic is not by any means a fetich, since no inherent or adventitious power is ascribed to the object itself. Its efficacy is wholly relative, inasmuch as it depends upon the power and efficacy of the person whose Relic it is said to be. The word itself is easily traceable to an ancient usage.

Among the Romans, as is known, the custom of cremating the bodies of the dead was very common. After the body had been thus disposed of, the ashes that remained were gathered up and placed in an urn.

[1] Ep. cx *ad Riparium.*

These remains were called *reliquiae,* or Relics. Suetonius tells us that on the death of Augustus his body was cremated, and the noblest personages of the equestrian order, in bare feet, gathered up the remains and deposited them in a mausoleum.[2]

Amongst all peoples it has always been customary to preserve the relics of their heroes and great benefactors, and to render the highest honors to those precious reminders of heroic virtue and splendid deeds. For it is a universal tendency of the human heart to honor greatness in whatever form it appears. The hero is ever the center of a popular cultus. Convention is often swept aside, and all for the time being become his willing slaves. His faults are minimized, or entirely overlooked, and the sweet perfume of the incense of popular devotion rises gratefully from the altar of their veneration. In ancient times the hero's defects or failings were often in the popular mind so blended with his virtues as to form one perfect whole: nay, these very faults became a sure proof of the hero's condescension in stooping to things of earth. They would brook no flaw in their idol. Hence the frequency with which we see in olden times the apotheosis of persons guilty of the most flagrant immoralities. This civic worship — often transformed into a religious cultus — towards the great men of the race, extended to whatever objects had been intimately connected with them in life. The remains of the hero — whether ashes, or parts of his body — were carefully gathered together, and preserved with a sort of fanatical superstition. One reason of this was the horror entertained among certain peoples of being deprived of burial, since they looked upon this as a

[2] *Octav. Aug.,* n. 100.

punishment from the gods, preventing, as they held, the future fruition of happiness on the part of the deceased. Again. It was commonly held that intimacy with or respect for a person whilst living should not cease at his death, but rather should assume a new form, and be perpetuated by the survivors.

If the memory of the departed was thus honored and revered, with much greater reason was reverence shown to his bones, his ashes, his vesture, sword, shield, or other object which seemed to bring the dead into closer proximity with the living. With this idea uppermost in their minds the ancients cherished religiously various objects that had belonged to their departed heroes, friends, or benefactors. Every nation, nay, every city had its popular shrines wherein reposed pious souvenirs of some god or goddess, or an object connected with the religious creed, or with some national hero.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the Egyptians embalmed not only their deceased friends, but also the bodies of the sacred animals which were preserved with superstitious awe. The relics of Osiris were venerated in fourteen different tombs. Prayer and sacrifice were the offerings to many of their mummies. The Syrians venerated the remains of a giant found in the bed of the river Orontes, and which they believed to be the body of the great hero of that name. The vessel in which Æneas sailed from Troy was piously preserved on the island in the Tiber. Other relics held in high and undoubted repute were Orpheus' lyre; the ships of Ulysses and Agamemnon; Leda's egg; the small portion of clay left over by Prometheus after he had fashioned the first man; the bones of the white sow and her young, sanctified by

Æneas; and countless other objects, the authenticity of which was by the people never for a moment subjected to doubt.[3]

The Hebrews were most careful to preserve the bones of their patriarchs, and they brought the bones of Joseph, with great pomp and ceremony, from Egypt into the Promised Land.[4] Eliseus cherished the mantle of Elias; and the people venerated the Ark of the Covenant and the relics contained therein. True, the Jews often went to excess in this veneration — as in the case of the brazen serpent — but the fact remains that they held in high esteem these precious relics pertaining to their faith.

Here it is well to remind the reader that it is a fallacy to assume that the worship of Christian Relics is simply a vestige and a development of paganism. The respect for the dead belongs exclusively neither to paganism nor to Christianity, for it is found among all peoples and in all times. It is, properly speaking, the human cry of the crushed heart longing and yearning to be reunited with the departed, or going out in sympathy towards an unfortunate member of the race. This is the general aspect of the veneration paid to the dead. It becomes either superstition, or true, lawful worship, or again it remains pure, human respect, according as the motive underlying the action is inspired by excessive credulity, legitimate reverence, or a mere spirit of humane feeling.

Now, the motive which prompted the Christians to preserve the remains of their dead was, besides the general principle of humanity, a deep reverence for

[3] For a more detailed account of these and other relics, cf. Mioni, *Il. Culto delle Reliquie*, c. i. Turin, 1908.
[4] *Exod.* xiii, 19.

the body itself, which was the temple of the Holy Ghost. A soul belonging to the Church Militant had informed that mortal covering; that flesh had been purified by the baptismal ablution; the brow had shone with the radiant profession of the cross; and the lips had been empurpled and sanctified by the sacramental touch of the Blood of Christ. Was not the Christian body therefore something more noble than a mere relict of a mortal being? For this reason we see the difference in the treatment accorded the body by pagans and by Christians. Whereas the Jews and the pagans were taught that the corpse was unclean, and that its touch brought pollution,[5] the Christian, on the other hand, esteemed it a high honor and a privilege to touch the mortal remains of one who had been in life thus closely united, by grace and sacraments, to the Divinity.

Moreover, the Christian faith in the resurrection of the body — a strong tenet of their belief in all ages — made them solicitous to care for the dead with all possible love and affection. This profound faith in a future life was common to Hebrews and Christians alike. The saintly Tobias "was careful to bury the dead, and they that were slain."[6] As a result he heard the comforting assurance of the Angel: "When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord."[7] It was this devout belief

[5] "The veneration of relics and the explicit belief in the resurrection have completely destroyed among Christians, the aversion formerly held by pagans and Jews towards graves and the dead." Fleury, *Costituz. de' Cristiani*, ii, 22.

[6] *Tob.* i, 20.

[7] XII, 12.

in the resurrection which ever caused the Christian to avoid the voluntary destruction of the body. Hence, as noted above, cremation has always been discountenanced by the Church.

With regard to the martyrs, whose remains formed the chief Relics, peculiar care was taken. If the ordinary Christian was buried with pious diligence, with far greater reason was the body of the martyr preserved with zealous fervor. This was done for various reasons.

In the first place, the martyr was recognized as all-powerful with God. He had fallen in defence of the faith: he was a champion of the Church, and it behooved the Church to honor her heroes with all possible veneration. In order to perpetuate his memory the Church would gather up those precious gems, and keep them ever before the eyes of her children, in order that being reminded of his virtues they might find a lasting incentive to acts of virtue, and especially to perseverance in the faith. Besides, this solicitude would tend to keep alive before men the memory of him who had confessed the Father who is in heaven. With the same crown of victory before their eyes, the faithful would be inspired to emulate the example of their more fortunate brethren, and thus martyrdom would claim new victors from the ranks of the steadfast.

Another reason is to be found in the custom of celebrating the anniversary of the Martyr's death. This was always a solemn remembrance of the departed hero. In order to carry it out with vivid reality, the Relics of the martyr were preserved in some favored spot, and thither the people thronged to do homage to the original. This occurrence was accompanied

with an outpouring of faith, of prayer to the martyr, and of honor and praise to God who had enabled His servant to triumph over the world and its allurements.

Then again, it became customary to celebrate Mass over the remains of the martyrs; and thus the practice, which is still followed, of celebrating the Sacred Mysteries over an altar-stone which contains holy Relics.

Although the word, relic, taken in its strict sense, signifies a part of the body, or the ashes of the departed, Christian fervor and enthusiasm soon extended the term to include objects which had come in contact with the person who was the center of this veneration. The former Relics are called by theologians either major or minor. The first consist of a large portion, as an arm, head, or limb; [8] the second, of some smaller parts, as a fragment of bone, or the like. Relics of contact, naturally, were of many kinds, and were reduced to two categories: objects used by the deceased, and other objects which had touched the body of the saint, or even his tomb.

Thus the early Christians recognized various secondary Relics of contact, and they were called by such terms as, *sanctuaria*,[9] *palliola, brandea, oraria.* The *sanctuaria* were very numerous in the first ages, since they were frequently handkerchiefs, or other pieces of cloth, or sponges which had been dipped in the blood of the martyr at his execution. They were preserved with the deepest reverence and piety, as a living testimonial of the faith of the martyr and the love of the survivors. Not unfrequently this courageous devo-

[8] Strictly speaking, a limb was not always considered a major relic.

[9] Cf. S. Greg. M. l. vii, *ep.* lii; ii, 9.

tion in collecting the blood of the holy victims cost the Christian his life, as it disclosed his own belief. Still, the faithful risked even life itself in order to satisfy their love. They also often obtained the remains of the martyr by bribing the executioners with money or other valuables.

As it was customary among the Romans to behead the condemned,[10] the body thus remained more or less in its entirety, and was carried off by the Christians for decent burial. The Roman law permitted the bodies of those who had been executed to be given to anyone who demanded them.[11] In this way Nicodemus boldly asked for the body of Christ, and Christians often availed themselves of the same privilege. Under the emperors hatred for the new sect caused the pagans to devise novel means for destroying the bodies of the Christians,[12] and thus preventing the survivors from adoring the Relics of their dead.[13] This was a belief of the pagans, and in their erroneous notion of Christianity they were encouraged by the Jews.

Now, in regard to veneration paid to the Relics of the Saints, nearly the same explanation will hold good that is used in presenting the subject of holy images.

[10] "Animadverti gladio oportet."— Ulpian i, 8, *De poen.* xlviii, 19.

[11] "Corpora animadversorum quibuslibet petentibus ad sepulturam danda sunt."— *Dig.* xlviii, 24. Burial in the city was forbidden.

[12] For a list of some of the instruments of torture, cf. Rock, *Hierurg.*, ii, p. 8–10.

[13] The pagans often believed that at the destruction of the body the soul also perished. Hence their ferocious zeal in doing away with Christian bodies. According to Eusebius the pagans would exclaim on casting the remains of the martyrs into the river: "Let them not become gods of the Christians, lest they who refuse to adore our gods begin to worship our slaves." *H. E.* viii, 6.

All reverence that is offered to such inanimate objects is strictly relative. We no more worship the bones of a saint than we do the marble statue or the painted icon. Each in its own way serves to recall to our minds the virtues and merits of the saint himself. We bow down before the Relic, and we exhibit all those marks of respect that the holiness and exalted station of the original require. Even in the possible case where the Relics before us were of some other individual, our ignorance of this fact would not leave us open to the charge of idolatry, since, as stated, all reverence towards such objects is directed chiefly to the original whom we intend to honor. To continue wilfully to venerate as sacred what we know to be unworthy of such respect, surely would be wrong. But this accusation against Catholics can never be substantiated. Superstition in such matters undoubtedly is possible,[14] but it has ever been condemned as heretical by Church and Fathers.

In early times the Christians, having gathered up the remains of the martyr, washed them carefully, anointed them with balm, wrapped them in fine linen or silk, and placing them frequently in rich caskets, deposited these precious gems in the quiet and peace of the tomb.[15] It was unlawful to afterwards touch or remove the Relics thus placed at rest. In later times, for good reasons, the Roman pontiffs removed many Relics, as we shall presently see.

[14] Cf. *Sum. Th.* II–II, 96, 4.

[15] At the execution of a martyr pious Christians were wont not only to gather up fragments of his flesh, but also by means of a sponge to collect whatever blood they could. This blood-stained sponge was then placed in a small vase, which frequently was imbedded in the soft mortar inclosing the tomb. The vase was marked SA (*sanguis*), and for a long time was used as an index to the burial place of a martyr.

In burying the remains of the martyr his name was inscribed on the tomb. If unknown, it was customary to place among the Relics medals of the reigning emperor. Thus in digging deeper the foundations under the Confession of St. Peter, in Rome (under Urban VIII), medals of this description were found. On one side were these letters:

M. COMM. ANT. P. FEL. AUG.

Marcus Commodus Antonius Pius Felix Augustus.

On the reverse was a figure holding a spear, or wand, and a palm. Underneath were the letters:

IMP. P. M. TP. P.

Imperator Pontifex Maximus, Tribunitiæ Potestatis.[16]

It has been asserted by non-Catholic writers that the respect shown to Relics was a mere civil act. From the documents of the early Church we see on the contrary that this veneration was a real religious act. "The devil made great efforts," says the Circular Letter of Smyrna, regarding the body of St. Polycarp, "to prevent us from obtaining the relics of the saint." Many were afraid, it seems, that the Christians might adore these relics instead of the Crucified. "Nevertheless, we have obtained possession of his bones which are more precious than gold and the richest gems, and we have deposited them in an honorable place. There, with the help of God, all together we will celebrate with great rejoicing the natal day of the martyr, in order to honor the memory of God's heroes,

[16] Armellini, *Le chiese di Roma*, 710. The Pope used great precaution in this work. Priests were always present, and it was forbidden under excommunication for any one not connected with the work to enter, or to carry off any of the relics.

and to encourage the living." [17] This celebration of the anniversary of the saint was accompanied by the oblation of the Holy Sacrifice, thus making of the occasion an act of religious worship.

The Roman law also recognized as sacred the place where a human body was buried. This applied to persons of every creed. For this reason the Christians were enabled, as a rule, to care for their dead, and to use legal means to obtain the right of sepulture. Under the law the pagan priests held jurisdiction over the burial places, and violators of tombs were punished with exile, or deportation to the mines. At times, it is true, the popular fury swept away the application of the law as regards Christian bodies, and the cemeteries were confiscated by the government, as happened under Valerian (in 258), and under Diocletian (in 303). But the reaction always brought back a restoration of these burial places. Constantine, by his decree of 313, authoritatively gave to the Church complete jurisdiction over the cemeteries.[18]

The piety of the faithful in this regard was often rewarded with well-authenticated miracles,[19] as is well known from the lives of the Saints. When the Council of Trent declared that the bodies of the Martyrs and other Saints were to be venerated by all Christians,[20] it simply re-affirmed the custom in vogue from the beginning. That this pious reverence should be recognized by the Saints with miraculous favors is

[17] *Ep. Circ. Smyr.* c. xviii. Cyprian, *ep.* xxxiv, 3. P. *L.* iv, 331.
[18] Marucchi, *Guide*, p 12.
[19] In the *Apost. Constitut.* there is a warning against magicians, and an exhortation to the faithful to go, in their needs, "to the churches where repose the remains of the martyrs." C. vii.
[20] *Sess.* xxv.

not to be questioned.[21] There are instances in Holy Writ pointing to the efficacy of Relics.

In the first place, an allusion to this is seen in the miraculous cures wrought in the sick who allowed simply the shadow of St. Peter to pass over them.[22] So great was the power given to St. Paul that, "there were brought from his body to the sick handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them and the wicked spirits went out of them." [23] They who had touched the hem of Christ's garment were immediately made whole, [24] and the people begged for this boon, not without success.[25]

Nor were these miracles restricted to the New Covenant. We read of the rod of Aaron being preserved as a relic along with the other precious treasures in the Ark of the Testament.[26] And the wonders wrought by Elias were continued even after his death, when his mantle in the hands of Eliseus caused the waters of the Jordan to be "divided hither and thither, and Eliseus passed over." [27] Eliseus himself worked an even greater wonder when, "some that were burying a man, saw the rovers, and cast the body into the sepulchre of Eliseus. And when it had touched the bones of Eliseus, the man came to life, and stood upon his feet." [28]

[21] During a plague at Rome (680) the people carried the relics of St. Sebastian in procession through the city, and the plague ceased. Sigonius, *De Regno Ital.* ii, an 680. St. Gregory Nazianzen says that the relics of the saints are as powerful as their souls, meaning that the devotion is powerful. *Orat.* iv, *C. Jul.*, n. 69. Cf. Ambrose, *Exhort. Virg.* i; Aug. *De Civ.* xxii, 8.

[22] *Acts* v, 15.

[23] Xix, 12.

[24] *Matt.* ix, 20.

[25] Xiv, 36.

[26] *Heb.* ix, 4.

[27] IV *Kings* ii, 14.

[28] IV *Kings* xiii, 21.

These Scriptural references simply accentuate the fact that God has often been pleased to extend to inanimate objects a part of the communicated power and efficacy which He usually reserves to His servants. This circumstance justifies the more than ordinary respect which is accorded such objects without, at the same time, ascribing any direct or inherent virtue to the relic itself.

From the fact that the Relics of the martyrs usually remained permanently where they were first deposited, it is easy to see that in the celebrations which were held in their honor it was but natural to offer the Holy Sacrifice in the same place. Thus arose the custom of celebrating Mass over the martyr's tomb. An allusion to this was often noted in the Apocalypse, where St. John saw, "under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God." [29] It was meet that Christ, the Victorious, should repose upon the throne erected over the trophies of His heroes. No more fitting altar could well be chosen than that which was built upon all that remained of the champions of the faith. In this way Christ, in the Holy Sacrifice, sealed as it were, blood with Blood.[30]

In the course of time the next most natural step was to erect a chapel or church over this hallowed spot; and thus we find the early churches rising in various parts of the Christian world, and sheltering the tomb and Relics of the martyr who reposed beneath. Sometimes the position of the tomb rendered it necessary to alter the design of the structure, but this was done rather than touch or remove the precious remains that lay below.

Prudentius in his poems often points to this fact.

[29] *Apoc.* vi, 9 [30] St. Ambrose, ep. 22.

In speaking of St. Vincent, the martyr of Spain, he tells us: "The altar shelters his blessed bones in tranquil peace; and in its calm depth they inhale the soft atmosphere of heavenly grace." [31] He pictures the remains of St. Eulalia, a martyr under Diocletian, as reposing under the altar, and seated at the feet of her God.[32] Incidentally, the poet refers in these passages to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Prudentius left many hymns in honor of the martyrs both in Spain and in Rome, where we find him about the year 405. In these and in many other places he speaks of the Relics of the martyrs as reposing under the altar.

The same facts are mentioned by St. Paulinus of Nola, who by his frequent reference in a casual way, leaves the unmistakable impression that such was the ordinary custom. Thus, in a poem speaking of the martyr, St. Clare, he adds: "The holy altar shelters becomingly thy body, that the altar of God may shield the temple of Christ." [33]

As observed above, the Relics were ever guarded most jealously in early times, so that they were concealed in shrines and tombs, and not exposed to the gaze of the people. Hence we read of a certain Lucilla, in Africa (about 311), who was wont to carry about her person a small portion of the bones of a supposed martyr. She was much devoted to these

[31] Altar quietem debitam
Praestat beatis ossibus:
Subjecta nam sacrario,
Imamque ad aram condita
Coelestis auram muneris
Perfusa subtus hauriunt.
— *Peristeph.* hym. v, 515–20.

[32] L. c. *hym.* iii, 211–4.
[33] Ep. xxxii *ad Severum.*

relics, and used to kiss them frequently before Holy Communion. The bishop, Cæcilianus, forbade this practice, the more so since the authenticity of the Relics was more or less doubtful. Rather than obey, Lucilla left the Church and became a Donatist. We read, too, of the relics of Eulogius and Augurius who were martyred with Fructuosus in Tarragona (259). The faithful had gathered up the remains, but each person was warned in a vision to return them, and deposit them all in one place, which they did.[34] These facts show the custom then prevalent in regard to keeping the Relics removed from public gaze.

The secondary Relics — those called *reliquiæ contactus* — as bits of clothing, or objects used by the saint, or even objects that had touched his remains, were often carried in a small reliquary, or *capsula,* suspended from the neck. This privilege was early reserved to ecclesiastics. It was called *honor capsellaris,* or *capsularis,* and was often a badge of recognition of their state. Thus in the life of Amator, bishop of Auxerre (†418), it is related that he was recognized as a servant of the true God by reason of the reliquary which he wore.[35]

The customs of East and West were not always in accord as regards the treatment of Relics of the Martyrs' bodies. Shortly after the peace of Constantine the Eastern Christians began to open the tombs of the Martyrs and to take therefrom the remains and distribute them to various churches and prominent personages. On these occasions there was always much public rejoicing and celebrations of divers kinds.[36] In

[34] Tillemont, *Mém.* iii, p. 84.
[35] *Acta SS.* t. i, Maii, p. 57.
[36] Mioni, op. c. p. 80 — cf. St. Basil, *hom. de 40 MM.* — Greg. Nyss. *hom. in S. Theodor.*

the West, on the other hand, the tombs were preserved intact for some time. Rome was the last to yield to the importunities of the faithful for Relics of the greater saints. In the fifth century, however, the West began to remove parts of the remains of the Martyrs, and to distribute them as precious gems to churches and distinguished persons. Thus, Vigilius, bishop of Trent, sent to Milan and to Constantinople Relics of the bodies of Saints Sisinius, Martyrius, and Alexander.[37] St. Paulinus (506) also assures his friend Severus that he will send the latter some Relics, if possible, for the church which Severus was then building. At the same time the Saint forwards a Relic of the true Cross, which he declares was presented to him by the bishop of Jerusalem.[38]

In Rome, however, as stated, affairs proceeded more slowly. Although in the ninth century St. Leo III could calmly state to Richulphus, archbishop of Mainz, "I have forwarded by the venerable Bishop Beruharius, at your request, the relics of St. Cæsarius;" [39] still, in the time of the first Gregory (†604) even the empress Constantina was unable to obtain the Relics she sought. The letter of St. Gregory is interesting, as shedding considerable light not only on the practices at Rome in the seventh century, but also on the peculiar occurrences which served to buoy up the faith of the Romans at this period.

The empress was building a church in honor of St. Paul, and she begged the Pope to forward the head or other Relic of the Saint. St. Gregory expresses his surprise and almost consternation, at the audacity of

[37] Mioni, l. c.
[38] *Ep* xxxi *ad Severum.* See also Bede, *H. E. Ang.* i, 29.
[39] *Ep.* xiii, Mansi, xiii, 977.

the Orientals in daring to disturb the remains of the Martyrs, much more, in venturing to divide the Relics and send them broadcast. As if to confirm and give strength to his contention, he relates various marvels that occurred in Rome relative to similar proceedings.

Pelagius II (†590) ordered restorations about the tomb of St. Lawrence. During the progress of the work the tomb was opened, and the workmen who had dared to gaze upon the remains of the martyr were stricken, and all died within ten days. One of the officials on removing a few bones near the body of St. Paul died suddenly. These and like happenings caused St. Gregory to write, "Know, gentle lady, that when the Romans wish to bestow Relics of the Saints, they do not dare to touch the body of the martyr; but rather they place small pieces of silk in a casket, and after leaving it for some time near the Saint's body, they remove it with all reverence, and deposit it in the church to be consecrated. There the same miracles occur as if the church sheltered the actual remains.[40] He adds, that at Rome and in the West generally it is looked upon as a serious offence to touch the remains of the saints; and for this reason he refuses the empress the *sudarium*, or face cloth, of the Saint, since it was inclosed with the remains.[41]

St. Leo III was wont to celebrate Mass upon the tombs of the Martyrs, and then to send the corporal to friends as a precious Relic.[42] The Popes were accus-

[40] *Ep.* xxx, l. iv. *P. L.* lxxvii, 700.

[41] Pope Hormisdas had in the same sense refused the count Justinian (afterwards emperor) relics of St. Paul and St. Lawrence. He alleged as a reason the custom of the Roman Church (519).

[42] Some Greeks being doubtful about the efficacy of such relics, Leo cut one of the corporals, and blood flowed from it. Mioni, op. c. 85.

tomed to lower small pieces of gold cloth or silk into the graves and upon the tombs of the Apostles, and then give these pieces of cloth to pious pilgrims. Bits of cloth tinged with the martyr's blood, dust from his tomb, flowers, and other objects that had touched the sepulchre, were held in the highest veneration.

As has been observed above, one reason why the Christians were so devoted to the Relics of the Saints was the deep and abiding faith which they possessed in the power of their champions. History is replete with narratives of miraculous favors granted the faithful in response to their prayers over the sacred Relics.[43] True, modern criticism of a certain malodorous and destructive nature has chosen to scoff at what it is pleased to term superstition. But historical criticism which confines itself to destructive principles is simply prejudice masquerading under false colors. When bias is allowed to warp the judgment of the historian or novelist, and preconceived notions are called in to give the lie to indisputable facts, then reason is adrift on an uncharted sea, and the haven of truth will ever remain an undiscovered land. Such mistermed criticism is an historical Frankenstein, building for itself a galvanized monster, and then ascribing to every innocent creature the revolting attributes of this artificial wonder. It is not our purpose to dilate on miracles or their possibility. Hence we simply refer in this manner to the malevolent and uncritical attitude assumed by writers of the stamp of Zola when treating of mat-

[43] A simple reason why such wonders are not now prevalent in regard to the use of relics, is that relics are not at present so openly and frequently the center of popular veneration as they were formerly. Where popular devotion has continued, many such favors are still obtained, as witness the shrines of St. Anne.

ters that transcend their comprehension and jar their unbelief. The many miracles related in History are facts, and as such must be accepted or denied on the only solid basis upon which the candid historian is permitted to build — proofs and documentary evidence.[44] In the miracles of the Catholic Church, it may be added, proofs not only are not rejected, but are always required before the Church places the seal of her approval upon the facts presented to her.

Among the customs of the Middle Ages in regard to Relics must be noted the practice of collecting oil from the lamps that burned before the tombs of the martyrs. Both in the catacombs and in the churches this practice existed from early times. Lamps were placed there by pious persons and were kept burning, often, both day and night. The faithful would frequently take a few drops of the oil and preserve it as a precious Relic. There is an interesting example of this practice furnished us during the pontificate of the first Gregory.

Theodolinda, queen of the Lombards, was erecting a church in honor of St. John the Baptist. In accordance with the custom of the times she asked the Pope for some Relics for the consecration of the edifice. To this end she dispatched to Rome a priest known as the Abbot John. Pope Gregory gave him permission to visit the Roman catacombs and to collect a few

[44] It may here be observed that during the Middle Ages faith was strong and fervent, while the physical sciences were still in their infancy. Hence, at times certain marvellous facts were accounted as miracles, which might well be explained through natural causes. But such occurrences form a small minority when confronted with the many authenticated favors and miraculous interventions. For this reason the careful historian will use caution in either accepting or rejecting certain wondrous cures or other facts. However, he cannot, unless laboring under bias and prejudice, reject miracles witnessed and attested to by persons of poise and judgment.

drops of oil from the lamps before the martyrs' tombs. The Abbot made the rounds of all the catacombs, and placed the oil thus collected in small glass vials.[45] He attached to each vial the name of the saints from whose tomb he had obtained the oil. These precious mementos were then placed in the new church by the queen. The Abbot also made a list of the catacombs visited, and under each heading he grouped the names of the saints in that particular region. This list is still preserved, and it furnishes a valuable guide in learning the names of various catacombs since discovered.[46]

As noted above, it was customary to celebrate Mass over the tomb of the martyr. Some of the faithful desired to have Mass offered over the graves of their deceased friends and relatives. To obviate this Pope Felix I (†274) decreed that the Holy Sacrifice should not be offered over a tomb unless it actually contained the remains of a martyr.[47]

After the era of peace, churches, and, consequently, altars were multiplied everywhere. Possibly following up the above mentioned decree of Pope Felix the practice became universal of placing Relics in the altar.[48] We have already mentioned several examples in the West. Even Pope Gregory seems to have relented in his severity with regard to certain Relics, as we find him sending Relics to Palladius, bishop of

[45] It may be observed that in these vials the cross is represented with Christ in the form of an *Orante* instead of having the hands or feet nailed. Marucchi, *Éléments,* i, 99.

[46] The list, in quaint Latin, ends thus: Quas olea sca temporibus Domni Gregorii Papae adduxit Johannis indignus et peccator Domnae Theodolindae Reginae de Roma.

[47] Duchesne, *Lib. Pontif.* i, 158.

[48] Cf. Duchesne, *Origines,* c. xii, § 1. See also *Lib. Pontif.* i, p. 102, n. 1.

Saientes, in France, for four altars in his church.[49] (Though these may also have been Relics of contact). This practice was finally given the force and authority of a positive law, so that it is now forbidden to celebrate Mass on an altar that does not contain holy Relics.

The Greeks also are most careful about the use of Relics for the Holy Sacrifice. Originally it became customary for a Greek bishop to consecrate the *antiminsion*[50] for the use of priests who were travelling, or who were often obliged to celebrate on an altar that had not been consecrated. This *antimensium*, as it was often called, was made of silk or linen, and contained Relics of the saints, which were sewed into it. Later on, the use of this corporal was prescribed for every altar in the Greek Church. The various heresies that arose in the Orient, especially Iconoclasm, induced the Greeks to adopt this practice universally with regard to the antimensium. The seventh general Council of the Church ordered that Mass should be offered on an altar consecrated by placing Relics therein, "according to the ancient custom which we should follow."[51] The present practice of the Greeks is similar to that of the Latins with regard to the altar stone

Among the Latins the Relics for the altar were usu-

[49] *Ep.* xlix, l. vi. *P. L.* lxxvii, 834. Palladius had erected thirteen altars in the church. Four of these were still unconsecrated for lack of relics.

[50] This is a piece of linen or silk about ten by thirteen or fourteen inches. It is ornamented with some remembrance of the Passion, etc. It rests on the altar like a corporal. Cf. Magani, *Liturg. Rom.* iii, 123.

[51] Mansi xiii, 428. Deposition is the penalty for a bishop who dared to consecrate an altar without relics. Art. viii, can. vii. In the Profession of Faith (art. i) the person is made to declare . . . "accepting and embracing with all respect their (the saints') holy relics, I venerate them; being firmly convinced that I also can become a partaker in their holiness."

ally wrapt in silk, and at times placed in a small casket. To the silken receptacle was attached the name of the Saint, and it was then placed in a glass or metal tube. This was sealed by the bishop with his own seal, and then inclosed in masonry within the altar.[52] The altar thus becomes, in a sense, the tomb of the martyr. Hence the consecration of an altar closely resembles the ancient ceremony about the tomb of the Saint. Incense, flowers, lights, and other objects all recall the primitive rite at the grave of the martyr.

In the course of time a great development took place in the manner of venerating holy Relics. Whereas formerly they were ever kept concealed, the piety of the faithful now demanded that they be exposed to public view. At first the Relics were placed in receptacles styled reliquaries. The Relic itself was concealed from public gaze, but the reliquary was placed upon the altar to satisfy the popular devotion. Finally, in the thirteenth century we find the Relic exposed openly behind a small glass in the reliquary itself. This latter took various forms. It sometimes was in the shape of a monstrance, but more often in the form of a large square like a picture frame. Behind the various tiny panels the Relics reposed on a silken background. These frames not unfrequently served as ornaments or panels for the altar, and also as covers for the missals and other books.

From this period a new phase of worship set in. Instead of seeking the body of the Saint, the chief quest was for numerous small Relics of many saints.[53]

[52] Mioni, 331.

[53] Let us observe that generally speaking a reliquary was made to suit the relic, i. e., if the relic was from an arm, the reliquary was made in the form of an arm, etc. This accounts for the mistake, often noted later, of believing that the whole member,

Churches and prelates strove to obtain as many as possible. Hence the precious remains were subjected to frequent dissection to satisfy the universal desire. This multiplication of Relics caused the faithful to rather neglect the so-called Relics of contact, and to seek actual parts of the mortal remains of the saints. This wish was the more easily satisfied, since the Relics were divided into exceedingly small particles. It became a peculiar cause of pride for a church to possess and to expose a vast number of these holy souvenirs.[54]

So great and fervent was the devotion of priests and people in this regard, that no expense was spared to make the reliquaries as appropriate as possible to the dignity of the sacred treasures they enshrined. For this purpose the goldsmiths of the Middle Ages were called upon to execute their most elaborate works to shelter the Relics that were placed in the principal churches and in the private chapels of prominent personages. In the chief churches of Europe, and, especially since the spoliation of 1870 in Italy, in many foreign museums, these reliquaries are still admired for their magnificent workmanship.[55]

It must not be thought, however, that the devotion towards sacred Relics met with no opposition.[56] In

arm, etc., was contained in said reliquary. This should be borne in mind when in the course of history we find different churches claiming the head or other member of the same saint. By a sort of legal fiction a saint could thus have several tombs: hence the occasional errors.— Cf. Duchesne, *Origines*, l. c.

[54] The relics were also preserved in private houses as well as in the churches.

[55] The reliquaries of St. Genevieve, in Paris, and of the Miraculous Host, at Orvieto, are fine examples.

[56] Among the early opponents were Aëtius and Eunomius. Later on, Copronymus had many relics cast into the sea.— Sigonius, *an.* 766.

the fourth century the erratic Vigilantius immortalized himself by fiercely denouncing the use of Relics, and thereby drawing down upon himself the famous denunciation of St. Jerome — an unsavory notoriety which the unfortunate man perhaps little expected.[57]

The worst enemies of holy Relics seem to have been the various barbarian hordes that contributed to the overthrow of the old order in the West. The many invasions of Goths, Vandals, and other ferocious aliens left mute but tragic evidence of their hatred as well as of their barbarity. The Goths appear to have out-Vandalled the very Vandals in this regard. When Vitiges, after besieging Rome, failed to take the city (537), his soldiers, fired by frenzy and a fanatical hatred of all things sacred, gave themselves up to all the excesses imaginable. Having heard much of the burial places of the martyrs and the supposed riches to be found in the Catacombs outside the city, they entered those subterranean vaults with axe and pick and devastated the holy abodes of legions of Christian heroes. The *loculi* were broken open, the Relics profaned and destroyed, and the crypts desecrated. Such was the havoc which they wrought that Pope Vigilius, in an inscription which commemorates the event, laments the fact that the Goths, "having encamped near the city, first made war on the Saints, and with im-

[57] Vigilantius had been a wine-merchant, or tavern keeper, and later became a priest at Barcelona. He visited St. Paulinus and then St. Jerome. The latter soon sounded the stranger, who then threw aside the mask. He was offended at the saint's austerities, and his reading of Origen. Vigilantius spread many calumnies against the holy doctor, and began to preach errors about saints, their relics, prayers for the dead, chastity, and other things. St. Jerome tried to set him on the right path (*ep.* 75), but in vain. When the saint received the heretic's last effusion, in a single night he dictated the now famous treatise against Vigilantius.

pious hands profaned their holy sepulchers." The *Liber Pontificalis* adds that, "the churches and the bodies of the Saints were entirely ruined by the Goths."

Even before this time other hordes had time and again devastated the Catacombs and the churches of Rome; as witness the invasions under Alaric (410), the Vandals with Genseric (455), Richimerus and the Goths (472), and Totila in both attacks, the second of which was successful (538, 545). Vigilius (538-55) had in the meantime made some restorations, but these were rendered useless by Totila's second invasion, which almost entirely destroyed the city.

Pope John III (559–72) made a feeble effort to restore the places wherein reposed the holy remains of the martyrs, but Rome was but a heap of ruins, and the people were reduced to a state of beggary.

The Arian Lombards from the north soon led the Popes to adopt a new policy with regard to the sacred Relics. These heretics emulated the Catholics in seeking the bodies of martyrs to add splendor to their churches.[58] Hence we find Boniface IV (607–14) giving orders to open many tombs, and to convey the Relics into the city.[59] These Relics were deposited in the old Pantheon which was consecrated to Our Lady of Martyrs (610).[60] Other Popes, Paul I (†767), and Pascal I (817–24), inaugurated periods of great

[58] Even in the third century the Novatians eagerly sought the relics of the saints. They pilfered the cemetery of Maximus of the relics of St. Silanus to sanctify their conventicles.— Armellini, *Cimiteri*, ecc. 36.

[59] Twenty-eight wagon loads are said to have been brought into the city.

[60] S. Maria ad Martyres. There is a doubt expressed by some historians as to whether these were remains of the bodies, or merely relics of contact.— Cf. *Éléments d'Archéol.* Mioni doubts the fact, p. 108.

translations of Relics. The latter pontiff in 817 ordered the tombs of the martyrs still in the catacombs to be reopened, and it is said that over twenty-three hundred sepulchers yielded up their sacred contents. These were conveyed to the Church of St. Praxedes, where a large marble slab, still there, bears witness to their names and the great event of their removal.[61]

In the East the devotion to holy Relics was ever the same as in the West. One of the objects of the Iconoclasts was to destroy Relics as well as images. In this connection, however, it may be well to remark that Photius, author of the Greek Schism, and later admired by many non-Catholics, was most vehement in denouncing the errors of the image-breakers. He calls them: "A new breed of Jews, enemies of Christ, and who, desecrating the images of Christ and His Saints, complete the work left unfinished by their forefathers." [62] He adds: "We worship the sign of the Cross. . . . Thus also do we piously venerate the temples of the Saints and their tombs and Relics, whence flow all cures." [63]

As soon as the Popes began to remove large quantities of Relics, a holy avidity to obtain them took possession of the Franks and other nations. Hence, as Eginard, secretary to Charlemagne, tells us, we see persons of the highest rank in the social and learned worlds striving to obtain as many Relics as possible.[64] In 765 Chrodogangus, bishop of Metz, received from Paul I the bodies of Sts. Gorgonius, Naborus, and

[61] Similarly Paul I (757) brought a large number of relics to the church built on the site of his own home, and since called S. Silvestro in Capite. A marble slab is still extant there.
[62] *De Synodis,* Mansi, xiii, 494.
[63] L. c. 495.
[64] Fleury, *H. E.* l. 47.

Nazarius. From that time there was a perfect exodus of distinguished Saints from Rome and from Italy.[65] The devotion of the various peoples was thus enkindled to the highest point of fervor and attachment to their heavenly protectors.

The upheavals, political and religious, of later times naturally produced their effect with regard to the Relics of the Saints. When man raised his hand against his God, little wonder that he spared not God's servants. The agitators of the Lutheran period seem to have been particularly vicious in their hatred of Relics. They profaned and destroyed whatever Relics fell into their hands, thinking to please God by obliterating the memory of His Saints. Thus, when the Constable of Bourbon led his victorious troops to Rome, though he himself perished, his followers sacked the city; and among other atrocities, they cast to the winds the Relics of the Saints, and sold the valuable reliquaries to the ubiquitous Jews (1524). Relics everywhere were seized by the reformers, and either burned, cast into the rivers, or otherwise destroyed.[66] This work was equalled if not surpassed by the ferocity which was the keynote of the French Revolution. The reliquaries generally reached the goldsmith or the mint, and were there fused for the metal they contained.

During the Middle Ages the devotion towards Relics manifested itself in countless forms. Not only were they an object of popular piety, but they seemed to

[65] A few of these exiled saints are: Sts. Severus, Vincentia, Innocent, Sergius, Bacchus, Sebastian, Vitus, Alexander and Hippolytus; Sts. Gordian and Epimachus: Patritius and Metellus: Cyriacus, etc. Cf. Mioni, 75, for a longer list. Also Sigebertus, *Chronicon*, an. 969.

[66] The relics of Blessed Jean d'Arc were treated in this way, the ashes and bones remaining after her execution being cast into the Seine.

enter into the public and social life in many ways. Thus, when the ordeal by water was in use, the priest when about to give Communion to the suspected person, addressed him as follows: "I adjure you by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost . . . and by these sacred Relics which are in this church, that you presume not to receive Communion or to approach the holy altar, if you are conscious of this crime, or if you have consented to it, or know aught about it." [67] According to the laws of Charlemagne, "all oaths must be taken in the church, or upon the Relics of the Saints. Thus will he answer: 'May God help me, and may the Saints whose Relics are here before me assist me to tell the truth.'" [68] It was also customary to consecrate the doors of churches with Relics.[69] Sometimes councils were held on the occasion of the translation of Relics, as we see in the case of St. Geminianus, in 1106. On that occasion a great public celebration took place.[70]

It is well known that even in early times, especially in the East, Relics often were transported from one place to another in order to purify a certain locality from idol-worship or other evils. For this reason did the emperor Gallus erect a magnificent church in the notorious grove of Daphne (351). Thither were sent the Relics of the martyr St. Babyla. Prodigies accompanied this event, and the famous oracle of Apollo was struck dumb. Julian afterwards had these Relics

[67] Canciani, *Barbarorum Leges Antiquae*. t. i, p. 282, Venice, 1781. This ordeal by water (cold) was abolished by Lothaire I, the Lombard. Ibid. 201, n. 55. See especially t. iii, p. 4.

[68] Canciani, op. c. i, 154.—Greg. M. l. v, *ep.* 33.

[69] Laws of Louis the Pious, Canciani, i, 185.

[70] Muratori, *Rer. Ital.* vi, p. 90. Venice, 1765. Very often indulgences were imparted on the occasion of the translation of relics.

removed.[71] The illustrious Rabanus Maurus (b. 776) built thirty churches and chapels, and gathered into them as many Relics as he could possibly collect. He named these edifices after the principal Saints whose Relics they sheltered.[72]

The laws of the Middle Ages have frequent mention of Relics as playing an important part in judicial matters. Besides the cases cited above, there are many instances showing the recognition accorded them by the civil law among various nations. In civil or criminal cases it was customary to make the witness swear by placing one hand on the Relics and the other on the hands of the person accused It must be noted, however, that this method was not always used, but only when it was otherwise impossible to discover the truth.[73] Again. In taking cognizance of murder committed in a church, a distinction was made. If the doors of the church were consecrated with Relics of the Saints, the punishment was more grievous.[74]

Like all things, even the most holy, Relics were at different times exposed to abuse. Not only did the enemies of religion assail them, but unscrupulous Christians at times made use of them as a commercial asset.

In the first place, the avidity to possess Relics led to many thefts on the part of persons otherwise honest.[75] It came to be looked upon as a sort of pious intrepidity. The annals of the Middle Ages are replete with

[71] Theodor. *H. S.* iii, 6.
[72] *Mon. Germ. Hist.* t. ii, 155.
[73] *Tit. de Purgat.* Can. 1, Bojoar. tit. vi.
[74] *Cap. Reg. Franc.* Canciani iii, 198; see i, 185; ii, 171.
[75] Even in the fourth century there were many who made a practice of exhuming the bodies of the martyrs and other prominent dead; the object was to obtain the treasures that were sometimes buried. St. Gregory Nazianzen has many epigrams against this abuse. Cf. *Epig.* 31–94. The emperors also forbade this. Tit. *de Sepul. Violat.*

accounts of such thievery. During the reign of Louis the Pious, the deacon Deusdona, who had charge of the Roman cemetery of Sts. Peter and Marcellinus, signalized himself by his activity along this line. His greatest achievement, perhaps, was the theft of the bodies of the two Saints mentioned. These remains were taken with the assistance of three other men who had come to Rome with the deacon on this quest. It is rather amusing to read of their preparations. They had spent three days in prayer and in a rigorous fast. They finally succeeded, and the Relics were conveyed to Millinheim. There many miracles were wrought, and the town became a center of devotion and, incidentally, one of the most frequented in Germany. Such was the renown acquired by Millinheim, that a perfect mania seized all classes to obtain more Relics.[76] Among many high personages — prelates and princes — it became a fad to collect sacred Relics. In their minds it was difficult to impute moral turpitude to those who were thus actuated by pious motives; especially since God often wrought stupendous miracles in virtue of the devotion manifested by the new possessors.

The question however is far different when we come to those who made use of Relics for mercenary purposes.[77] Some there were who carried relics about as a means of obtaining sums of money for charitable works, or for the building of churches. Frequently they scrupled not to ascribe almost magical powers to

[76] Mioni, op. c. 146, has a long list of relics thus appropriated.

[77] There is a curious account of the abuse of relics in France. At the exhibition of certain relics a number of persons became violent, and continued as long as they were in presence of the relics. The Archbishop of Lyons soon detected the cause, which was to receive greater alms by exciting the sympathy of the bystanders. Nat. Alex. *H. E.* vi, p. 229.

the Relics which they carried, and in a sort of impious competition, to belittle the sacred memory of other Saints. Many scandals arose over these abuses These clerics (they were the worst) would often reduce the Relics to the smallest bits, and then proceed to sell the minute particles for exorbitant sums, pocketing all or the greater part of the money. Many decrees were promulgated by the Church and in local councils forbidding this traffic. In some cases a cleric was allowed to solicit alms, in virtue of the Saint whose Relics he bore, and for the church of the same Saint: but he was forbidden to preach.[78] In Hungary laws were passed forbidding any but a cleric of known probity and piety to carry Relics about.[79] Frequently it was found that Relics were falsified, and spurious relics sold and bartered at will. The Church ever vigorously denounced such a sacrilegious practice.[80] Finally in the Second Council of Lyons (1274) she absolutely forbade any cleric to carry Relics around even with the laudable purpose of seeking funds for a church or shrine. This decree aimed at entirely eliminating the abuse which so often followed from a practice otherwise of itself perfectly lawful. Indeed, in soliciting funds for the erection of a church or shrine to a saint, no moral guilt could be found in the act of simply exhibiting the Relics of the saint, and thus inciting greater popular devotion towards him. It was the possible abuse therefore which the Church struck at.

Besides the mercenary cleric there was also the lay

[78] *Conc. Pictav.* (1100) Mansi, xx, 1124.

[79] *Constit. Coloman.* i, c. xxvii.—Mansi, Ibid. 1173 Cf. *Le Commerce des Reliques*, by Guiraud, in *Mélanges*, De Rossi, 1892.

[80] The Abbot Guibert wrote with great energy against this abuse. Cf. *De Sanctis et eorum Pignoribus*, Paris, 1651.

forger, who used false Relics and forged decrees of authenticity.[81] Working on the popular piety he was enabled to reap a harvest by selling Relics, ostensibly of martyrs found in the catacombs.[82] For by some it was thought that every body found in those underground chambers was that of a martyr. On the contrary, the Church later decided that only the *loculus* in which were found vials that had contained blood, could be looked upon with safety as the tomb of a martyr. Even then the blood was to be subjected to chemical analysis.

Various kinds of false Relics were to be met with. There were, for example, bits of cloth torn from the dalmatics that enveloped the body of a Pope after his death. Gregory I forbade this practice under penalty of excommunication.[83] Then there were the false Relics that had been baptized. This happened when the possessor not knowing the name of a martyr, improvised a name, as Felix, Justus, Beatrix, that could with propriety be applied to any holy person. This occurred in the case both of real martyrs and of unknown persons. This baptism of Relics — practiced only by individuals — was also forbidden.[84] The Congregation of Rites, in 1691, forbade the celebration of Mass in honor of any martyr whose identity was

[81] A classic forgery was that by the monks of Emmeram. They pretended to have the bones of St. Denis, long venerated in France. An elaborate series of forgeries — including documents purporting to have been signed by Leo IX and Henry III — assisted them. They produced these papers only after the persons named were dead. The deception was not unmasked until 1850. Cf. P. Grisar, *Der Areopagite von St. Emmeram,* in *Kath. Theologie,* Jan., 1907.

[82] A certain Santino was apprehended and tried. Armellini, op. c. 144.

[83] *Decret.,* iv, t. ii, p. 852; ed. Venice, 1571.

[84] Gardellini, *Decret. Authen.* dec. 1482–3 (iii ed.).

uncertain, and whose name was not found in the Martyrology.[85] Throughout Gardellini's collection there are many decrees which go to show the care exercised by the Church in the matter of Relics.

There are many Relics extant concerning the authenticity of which much doubt exists. Thus, the tunics of Our Lord, now at Treviri and at Argenteuil; the crib, or manger of Bethlehem, at present in St. Mary Major's, Rome; the gridiron of St. Lawrence, the cup in which poison was offered to St. John, the crown of thorns at Paris, and other well-known relics, have been subjected to the scrutiny of modern criticism, and have been shown to be at least doubtful.

With regard to many of the famous relics of the Passion — brought from the East — an explanation is found in the crafty conduct of the Greek schismatics, who endeavor to impose upon the credulity of the crusaders and other pilgrims, before and since. Legendary tradition also had its share in clouding the authenticity of certain relics of the Blessed Virgin and of other saints.

Mioni observes that the Mystery Plays of the Middle Ages contributed in a way to the confusion. As is known, these sacred dramas were at first presented in the churches. After this custom ceased, the costumes formerly worn, if of value, were laid aside for safe keeping. Later on, a dress, for example, was found with the card attached: dress of the Blessed Virgin The pious faith of some at once saw in this not a mere theatrical costume long since forgotten, but the actual vesture of the Mother of God.[86] In this way not a few false relics came to light. And so down the

[85] *Dec.* 3246; 2170.

[86] Mioni, op. c. 214.

ages in one way or another legends appeared and flourished, and cast a halo about certain objects,[87] while popular fancy and devotion soon raised the object to its hallowed position. This has been the case with regard to the heroes of the world from time immemorial; and it seems that despite the Church's efforts legends played a certain definite part with regard to the accessories of sanctity.

It seems scarcely necessary to say that no real harm was done, no act of idolatry was perpetrated through the veneration shown to relics thought to be genuine but actually false. For we have explained in the beginning of this chapter that all worship and respect exhibited towards such objects is entirely relative. Such honor is directed ultimately towards God. If the relic is eventually found to be false, or even if this is never discovered, the honor being intended primarily for God, remains independent of the material object itself. "Take a domestic example. If you possessed a locket of what purported to be the hair of your mother, you would venerate and wear it out of love for your mother; and you would not throw it away unless you became convinced that it was not her hair, but that of some one else." [88]

In modern times there seems to be a deplorable lack of religious education with regard to the worship of Saints and their Relics. Formerly our ancestors lived in a sort of spiritual communion with their fellow-believers who had gone before. The idea of the Communion of Saints was deeply implanted in their hearts. In no other way perhaps did they more manifest this

[87] The quest for the Holy Grail, and the legends that grew up around it, are typical.

[88] Card. Vaughan, in *London Tablet*, Sept. 14, 1901.

devotion than by a fervent veneration of the Relics of God's heroes. Making this worship a part of their relations towards heaven, it is no wonder that the Saints were so close to them, that so many miracles were wrought by God, and that the Christian commonwealth as a whole experienced the favorable reaction on faith and morals. We ruthlessly cast aside a potent help towards the attainment of grace and spiritual advancement when we neglect to cultivate a personal, individual, and sincere devotion towards the great men and women of the Faith, who have sealed their belief in blood or in other heroic ways, and who have been raised to the dignity of a distinct place in the galaxy of Christian heroes A solid devotion towards holy Relics will not fail to bring about a renewal of the ancient splendors of the Church, and a wide display of the power of God's Saints for the uplift of the individual believer, and the edification and aggrandizement of the social Christian body. Verily, "dust shall confess to Thee, and shall announce Thy truth." [89]

[89] *Ps.* xxix, 10.

CHAPTER II

THE WORSHIP OF SACRED IMAGES

From the Beginning to the Seventh Century.

Qui videt haec vacuis agnoscens vera figuris,
Non vacua fidam sibi pascet imagine mentem.
—*St. Paulinus of Nola.*[1]

THE practice of image-worship is the outcome of a gradual but entirely legitimate development in the Church. The theology on the subject is clear and definite. A distinction always has been made between image-making and image-worship. The men who cut adrift in the sixteenth century from the one true Church claimed that the position they assumed in banishing sacred images of all kinds was based upon the explicit inhibition of pictorial representation as laid down in the First Commandment.[2] There we are told: "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing (פסל), nor the likeness (תמונה) of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them."[3]

Here, we are told by Protestant writers, is an ex-

[1] "He who beholds these lifeless pictures, rises to the strong truth which is nourishment to the mind." *Poema*, xxvii, line 513. *P. L.* lxi, 660.

[2] They had many early predecessors in the Jews, the Mohammedans, the Manicheans, Theopaschites, and other heretics.

[3] *Exod.* xx, 4, 5.

press prohibition formulated by God Himself, forbidding even the making of images of any kind, and by inference, of saints, angels, and the like. Catholics, however, have always held and do maintain that these words are to be taken in conjunction with what follows, "Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them." For even though we suppose that פסל had, under the influence of change common to every living language, come to denote not merely a graven image, but one destined for idolatrous purposes, we can scarcely assume without absolute proof, that תמונה — likeness — had also been forced from its broad significance of likeness, or representation, in general, to that of forbidden likeness, or idol. To assert this gratuitously is to beg the question, for the very expression refers to various likenesses of things above, beneath, and upon the earth. The making of representations of such objects for purposes other than idolatry not only is not forbidden, but on the contrary, is explicitly enjoined by God Himself, as we shall presently see.

It may be well to remark here that in the division of the Commandments of the Decalogue Catholics and Protestants disagree. We know that the precepts were ten.[4] We do not find instruction in the Scripture as to their division. Hence, the Church is to be followed in the custom handed down from the beginning. Now, Protestants sometimes accuse us of mutilating the Decalogue in order to apologize for our idolatry, as they are pleased to term it. So they divide into two distinct Commandments what we call the First. Catholics, however, follow the practice of the early Fathers, as Clement of Alexandria, St. Augustine, and St. Jerome, and divide the Decalogue into two parts,

[4] *Deuteronomy* iv, 13.

the first containing the duties of man towards God, the second, or the last seven Commandments, the obligations of man towards his fellows.[5]

The Old Testament is replete with passages which go to prove that it was perfectly permissible to make images for ordinary purposes.

"Thou shalt make also two cherubim of beaten gold, on the two sides of the oracle," God said to Moses. "Let one cherub be on one side, and the other on the other. Let them cover both sides of the propitiatory, spreading their wings, and covering the oracle, and let them look one towards the other, their faces being turned towards the propitiatory wherewith the ark is to be covered. . . . Thence will I give orders, and will

[5] Cf. Rock, *Hierurgia*, ii, p. 169. The division of the first two Commandments according to Catholics and Protestants is as follows:

First Commandment according to Catholics.

I. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them: I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me: and showing mercy unto thousands to them that love Me, and keep My commandments. — Exod. xx, 3–6.

First and Second according to Protestants.

I. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my comandments. Ibid.

A few early writers have presented the division in the way now accepted by most Protestants, but the majority with the Church follow the Catholic division.

speak to thee over the propitiatory, and from the midst of the two cherubims," [6] etc. And thus the ark was made.[7]

After God had punished the rebellious Jews by sending fiery serpents among them, he commanded Moses: "Make a brazen serpent, and set it up for a sign: whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live. Moses therefore made a brazen serpent. . . . which when they that were bitten looked upon, they were healed." [8] David left gold for "the likeness of the chariot of the cherubims spreading their wings." [9]

Under the "molten sea" which Solomon built, "there was the likeness of oxen, and certain engravings on the outside. . . . And the sea itself was set upon the twelve oxen. . . . And Hiram made four hundred pomegranates, and two wreaths of network . . . one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea." [10]

"And he made in the oracle two cherubims of olive tree. . . . And he set the cherubims in the midst of the inner temple." [11]

The temple must have contained a great many images, therefore, of oxen, lions,[12] cherubim, lilies,[13] and "divers engravings." [14] Around Solomon's "great throne of ivory . . . two lions stood. . . . And twelve little lions stood upon the six steps." [15]

These and many other examples prove conclusively that the mandate of God expressed in the First Com-

[6] *Exod.* xxv, 18.
[7] L. c. chap. xxxvii.
[8] *Numbers* xxi, 8.
[9] I *Paral.* xxviii, 18.
[10] II *Paral.* iv. Cf. III *Kings* vii, 18, 19.
[11] III *Kings* vi, 23.
[12] L. c. vii, 28.
[13] Verse 18.
[14] Verse 31.
[15] Ibid. x, 19, 20.

mandment refers simply to the adoration of such images, not to their formation. Nor was it strange that the Jews were warned particularly against the adoration of images. For living as they did among nations and peoples wholly given over to such abominations, it seems that proneness to idolatry was a national failing of the Jews. They even went so far as to worship and burn incense before the brazen serpent which Moses had erected.[16]

At a later period, as we learn from Josephus, a most determined resistance was made against any kind of images. The Jews caused this opposition to be felt so keenly that when Herod the Great erected a very precious "great golden eagle" over the large gate of the temple, the Jews protested vehemently, and as soon as Herod died, Judas and Matthias, armed with axes, destroyed the image.[17] Josephus explains that the Law forbade the making of images, or the displaying before the people of figures of animals.[18]

In spite of this severity of discipline among the later Jews, there are still extant Jewish monuments, catacombs, and burial places, with various images of human beings and of animals.[19]

It seems, therefore, sufficiently evident that the Jews

[16] IV *Kings* xviii, 4.

[17] *Antiq. Judaic.* l. xvii, c. 8.

[18] Ibid. This was all understood in the sense of worshipping them Hence, knowing that the Romans worshipped such images as gods, the Jews abhorred them. Garrucci (*Storia dell'Arte Crist.*, l. i, p. 11–12) cites many instances where they permitted or at least did not object to images when not intended for worship. Thus they did not object when Aristobulus and Marianna had paintings of themselves; nor when Agrippa decorated his palace with statues of his own daughters; nor when they used money which bore the image of the emperor. Garrucci cites a Jewish cemetery which he unearthed, and which contained many images of living beings.

[19] Cf. Leclercq, *Manuel d'Archéologie Chrét.*, i.

were not forbidden by God in the First Commandment to make images, but simply to worship them as the pagans adored idols. Nor does the New Dispensation contain the least hint of the impropriety of making pictures, statues, and other kinds of sacred images for the promotion of piety, as will presently appear.

From what we have explained on the subject of adoration,[20] the doctrine of the Church is rendered perfectly lucid in regard to images. The Old Law, excepting in so far as it proposes the natural law,[21] was abolished by the New Covenant for, "before faith came, we were kept under the law. . . . Wherefore the law was our pedagogue in Christ. . . . But after faith is come, we are no longer under a pedagogue." [22] The making and the pious veneration of images, as a consequence, being permitted by the natural law, and not having been condemned by any positive ruling of the Church, must necessarily still remain a legitimate procedure. We shall briefly state the Catholic position in the matter, and then trace the development of the practice from the very dawn of Christianity.

Aristotle laid down the principle that the mind is borne towards an image in two ways.[23] In the first place, the mind may consider the image itself as an object, consisting of wood, stone, or metal. Or again, the mind may dwell upon the contemplation of the image as a representation of an object absent from sight, or as a reminder of a person or prototype once

[20] Chap. i.

[21] Where the Old Law stands for the natural law, as in the Seventh Commandment, for example, it "valet semper et ad semper," to use the technical expression of the Schoolmen.

[22] *Gal.* iii, 23–5.

[23] *De Mem. et Reminisc.* c. 2; apud *Sum. Theolog.* p. iii, q. xxv, a. iii.

present.[24] Thus we gaze with quiet and sad reminiscence on the photo of a departed friend. Viewing this affection of the mind in the first manner, it requires no proof to understand that the mere material of the image — wood, stone, or metal — does not appeal to us in the same way as does the image in the second way, where the remembrance of our friend comes before the mind in all its vivid reality. In this latter consideration we manifest and exhibit the same signs of reverence and devotion towards the faded picture of a dear parent as we would towards that parent himself were he present.

This principle expounded by the Stagirite was elaborated by the Angelic Doctor in his Summa of Theology,[25] and indirectly approved by the Council of Trent when the Fathers declare that, "the honor shown to holy images is referred to the original" (*prototypum*).[26]

In order, then, to understand the Catholic position, we must bear in mind with the Fathers of the Second Council of Nicaea (787), that veneration or worship shown to holy images depends entirely on the intention of the person showing that reverence. For this reason the external sign itself is entirely optional and arbitrary.[27] Signs in themselves are merely indicative of some intention in the mind or relation to an external or absent object. The variety and various forms of

[24] Horace reminds us that an image affects the mind much more vividly than does the spoken word.

> Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,
> Quam quae sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus et quae
> Ipse sibi tradit spectator.
>
> — *De Art. Poet.*, 180.

[25] L. c.

[26] Sess. xxv, *De Imaginibus.* St. Basil says: "Imaginis honor et contemptus in prototypum redit." *De Sp. S.* c. lxxv.

[27] Cf. Lessius, *De Justitia et Jure*, l. ii, c. xxxvi, dub. iii.

significance attached to any given sign depend exclusively on custom or the intention of the individual. We uncover in reverence at sight of the national emblem, on hearing the national anthem, before the statue of a hero, genius, or great benefactor. The mind in all these actions is directing its respect and admiration towards the originals represented or recalled through the material medium of visible signs. So again, kneeling, prostration, and such like acts of obeisance are entirely arbitrary, and have from time immemorial been parts of the every-day life of the peoples of the Orient. Wherefore one may kneel before the king and before the Blessed Sacrament, and the two actions would be signs of far different kinds of reverence, for the mind would appreciate the infinite distance between the two objects, and therefore would gauge its degree of respect accordingly.

This distinction brings us to a consideration of another point brought out by the Nicene Council, namely, that adoration and worship may be absolute or relative.

Following along the lines laid down by the Council, St. Thomas says that honor and reverence, strictly speaking, belong only to an intellectual nature.[28] Whence it follows that the honor or respect exhibited to a person for his own sake would be absolute; that shown a sign or figure acting in a representative capacity for the original, would be merely relative.[29]

[28] P. iii, q. xxv, a. iv.

[29] Even those who deny this distinction must surely admit that this was the principle which urged Theodosius to so severely punish the Thessalonians who had insulted their sovereign by mistreating his statue. Did not the Protestants of England on many occasions confirm this distinction in a certain manner, though negatively, when they carried the effigy of the Pope

Since, therefore, any sign of external respect is directed properly toward the original, it is patent that in thus honoring a representation we pay it the same kind of homage as we would display to the prototype itself, only in a relative degree. This is the reason why Catholics say that in worshipping images we pay to them the same kind of veneration, relatively, that we show to the originals of those images. Nor should the term "worship" confuse us, since it is always understood in the sense adapted to the object worshipped, as when a civil magistrate is addressed, as, "Your Worship," and we speak of the worship of God. An image-worshipper[30] therefore is not by any manner of means an indolater.[31]

The subject of idolatry has often been treated in various ways, and it may seem superfluous to here reiterate what is perhaps well known. It will shed considerable light, however, on the present chapter if we bring out one or two points that concern our question more intimately,

The origin of idolatry seems to be coeval almost with the beginnings of the race. One of the most potent agencies that served to develop idol-worship was the continuous and ever-present fact of the powers of Nature as exhibited in the stupendous phenomena with which the material universe abounded.[32]

through the streets, heaped ignominy upon it, and then tenderly consigned it to the flames. Was not this a relative desecration, or an insult to the Pope himself? Nay, not many years ago (1850) we read that they burned in derision not only effigies of Pope, Cardinals, and Bishops, but even the images of the Blessed Virgin, and the crucifix itself! See Ward's *Life of Cardinal Wiseman*, vol. ii, p. 92–3.

[30] Εἰκονοδοῦλος, cultor imaginum.

[31] Εἰδωλολάτρης, idol-worshipper.

[32] It must be understood that it is not the author's intention to here treat of the origins of religion — an abstruse and fiercely

The realization of man's apparent impotence to grasp the causes of these startling manifestations and thus rise to a knowledge of their supreme Author led to a crude Nature-worship, or pure physiolatry, that was the forerunner of idol-worship. This physiolatry confined itself to an abject prostration of the powers of the mind before the fancied deities of earth, sky, sea, and woodland. The simple virtues of a primitive and hardy race idealized these qualities in divinities that exemplified sturdy virtue, physical prowess, and rugged courage in war. As uncouthness gradually gave way to a more or less refined mode of living, this physiolatry became a veritable devil-worship. The shrines of debauchery and prostitution common to the Babylonians were the result of a refined system of passion or sex-worship typified in the sensuous Baäl.[33] The Greeks, with the touch of exquisite artistry — the peculiar gift of that esthetic race — transformed the more or less gross and material obscenity of the Semitic deities into the fascinating lecherousness of Zeus and his coterie of distinguished voluptuaries. It was a far cry from Woden to Zeus, from Valhalla to Olympus, and paradoxical as it may seem, the race suffered spiritually with the improved condition and advancement of society.

The Oriental imagination, ever susceptible to the vagaries of a naturally fervid temperament, multiplied divinities almost beyond the power of enumeration. The poetic Hellene, with facile genius and

mooted question of Comparative Religion. The intention is simply to present a flashlight sketch of the development of idolatry as such. For the former point consult such authors as Schantz, *A Christian Apology*, t. i, c. iv., etc.

[33] Cf. Herodotus, *Hist.*, l. i, c. cxcix, concerning rites in temple of Venus.

nimble adaptability, evolved countless forms of rare beauty and incomparable grace, and with an equally light conscience proceeded to invest these plastic creations with a divine power, and then to adore them. The Roman was a willing imitator, and to his own heterogeneous aggregation of gods collected from the nations that fell before his arms, he soon affiliated those of the now humbled Greeks.

The East ever looked upon blood and sanguinary rites and ceremonies as the complement of religion.[34] The Romans, on the contrary, centering their faith and belief in familiar spirits, endeavored to appease these spirits by erecting statues and images of various kinds to their honor, as well as by sacrifice.

They recognized an individual *genius* presiding over each and everything that pertained to the life of man, and their piety could not manifest itself to better advantage than by clothing in visible form these ever-watchful and tutelary divinities. No city, town, or hamlet, nay, no family was without its protectors, its *lares* and *penates*.[35] When the Republic finally collapsed under the weight of corruption that bore it down, and a new era was inaugurated under the empire, the most natural tendency was to recognize a special genius, that of the emperor, who thus became also a god. Their temples were depositories for countless statues and images dedicated to their deities — images of gold, silver, and precious stones.[36]

[34] Fouard, *St. Peter*, ch. xv.

[35] We read that the emperor Alexander Severus kept a picture (*imago*) of Christ in his *lararium*.— Lampridius, apud Ruinart, *Acta Mart.*, p. 156, ed. Verona, 1731.

[36] In honor of her little daughter, a mother consecrates to Isis a diadem of pearls, rubies, and hyacinths, costly earrings, a necklace of thirty-six pearls with eighteen emeralds, clasps, bracelets for wrists and ankles, precious stones for every finger,

Now, it must not be thought that the pagans looked upon their statues and images as Catholics consider their sacred icons. For although some writers deny this, there appears to be abundant evidence to prove that the pagan actually believed that the divinity really and substantially dwelt in his image or statue.

This is the sense in which we are to understand the Old Testament on the subject of idols, and whence we draw our argument that the pagans actually adored — in the sense of *latria* — their hand-wrought idols. "You shall not make gods of silver, nor shall you make to yourselves gods of gold."[37] "Turn ye not to idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods."[38] The idol that is made by hands, is cursed . . . because being frail it is called a god."[39] "You shall see in Babylon gods of gold, and of silver, and of wood, and of stone."[40] The king asks Daniel: "Doth not Bel seem to thee to be a living god?"[41] Demetrius, the Ephesian silversmith, accused St. Paul before the people that the Apostle had declared, "they are not gods that are made by hands."[42] A popular tumult followed this assertion. This is ever the significance ascribed to idols throughout the Sacred Writings.

In the same way did the early Fathers always look upon pagan representations of false gods, namely, as the actual habitation of the divinities whom the idola-

and eight emeralds for the sandals. (*Corpus Inscript. Latin.*, ii, 3386; apud Fouard, l. c.) This gives one an idea of the profusion of gifts offered to the gods.

[37] *Exod* xx, 23.
[38] *Levit.* xix, 4.
[39] *Wisdom* xiv, 8.
[40] *Baruch* vi, 3.
[41] *Dan.* xiv, 5.
[42] *Acts* xix, 26.

ters pretended dwelt therein.[43] For this reason also did the martyrs cheerfully meet suffering and death rather than give to an image made by hands the honor due to the one only God. A few examples, representative of a large class, must suffice on this point.

In the first place we must remark that Clement of Alexandria who lived and wrote at the end of the second century, tells us how "Numa, king of the Romans, forbade the Roman people to represent God under the form of an image in the likeness of either man or animal. And thus for one hundred and seventy years the Roman temples contained no images. For he had given them to understand that the highest Good cannot be apprehended except by the mind."[44]

The same Clement also accuses the pagans of his time of worshipping the tombs of men as if they were actually temples of divinity. He shows how at first the idolaters worshipped a stone, a piece of wood, and a naked sword: even the early Romans paid divine worship to Mars under the symbol of a spear. Afterwards these crude images began to take on a human form.[45] "If I place before you all these images, you can easily see, glancing through them that, led by your depraved customs, you have ascribed to the sense-

[43] Lactantius (*Divinar. Institut.*, ii, 2 — *P. L.* vi, 259), ridicules the pagans for believing that the divinity dwelt in images. He goes on to quote Seneca (col. 260), who says that the pagans adore images (*simulacra*), offer up victims, etc., and yet despise the men who made the images.

"Quid inter se tam contrarium, quam statuarium despicere, statuam adorare?" (col. 261).

[44] "Numa, rex Romanorum, prohibuit Romanis, ne homini aut animali similem Dei facerent imaginem. Cum itaque centum et septuaginta annis templa aedificarent, nullam imaginem nec effictam nec depictam fecere. Occulte enim eis indicarat Numa, quod id quod est optimum, non alia ratione quam sola mente ulli licet attingere." *Strom.*, i, 15. *P. G.* viii, 778.

[45] *Cohort. ad Gent.* c. iv. *P. G.* viii, 135.

less creations of man honors that belong to God alone." [46]

St. Athanasius says as "the human mind withdrew from God, man gravitating in his thoughts and desires towards things of earth, attributed divine honor (*τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ τιμὴν*) to the heavens, the sun, moon and stars; and that transferring to wood and stone the heaven-given name of God, he ascribed to them the divine worship due only to God." [47]

Arnobius was, like St. Augustine, before his conversion, a teacher of rhetoric in Africa. After casting aside his errors, he exclaims: "O fatal blindness! but a short time ago I worshipped idols that came straight from the workshop — idols beaten out with hammers on the anvil: bones of elephants, pictures, even spoils hung up on the hallowed tree. Nay, when I looked upon a sacred stone, anointed with the oil of the olive, I, heedless of the lifeless form, spoke soft words to it, cajoled it, asked favors of it, convinced that it veiled a real and actually present and living principle." [48] This is the statement of a learned convert, who surely understood the enormity of his former errors.

We see the same belief in Trismegistus, related by St. Augustine. This Trismegistus was an Egyptian, and tells us that the "*statues* (*of the gods*) are ani-

[46] "Ea (*simulacra*) percurrentes, optime perspicietis vos vanissima consuetudine inductos, hominum artificia, quae sensu carent, divinis honoribus affecisse." L. c. 134.

[47] *Orat. cont. Gent* c. ix (*P. G.* xxv, 18). "Among the Semites, as among other primitive peoples, *masseboth*, or fetish-stones, were reverenced as *abodes of spirits*." Paton, in *Encyclop. Religion and Ethics*, t. ii, p. 287. Ed. 1910.

[48] "Venerabar, O caecitas . . . *tamquam inesset vis praesens*, adulabar, affabar, et beneficia poscebam nihil sentiente de trunco." *Adv. Gent.* i, 39. *P. L.* v, 767. Arnobius wrote about 304. Cf also St. Cyril H. *Cat.* vi, n. 10. *P. G.* xxxiii, 554.

mated, possessed of sense and life (*spiritu*); they work various marvels: they know the future, and foretell coming events by means of luck, prophets, dreams, and many other things.[49] All the Fathers speak in the same sense.[50]

The pagan writers themselves admit the same idea. When the worship of Priapus, a strange divinity, was introduced into Rome, it evoked witty attacks from the Roman poets. Horace represents the statue of Priapus soliloquizing:

> Olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum,
> Quum faber, incertus scamnum faceretne Priapum,
> Maluit esse Deum. Deus inde ego, furum aviumque
> Maxima formido.[51]

We read also that the philosopher Stilpo was driven from Athens by the Areopagites for denying the divinity of the Minerva of Phidias.[52] Once during a plague in Antioch, Epiphanes ordered that one of the high crags of Mt. Silpio be hewn in the form of an immense statue of Charon, in the hope that the people would be thus incited to renew their worship and devotion towards the gods.[53]

In the midst of Roman voluptuousness a new deity

[49] *De Civ. Dei*, viii, 23.

[50] "Ecce funditur, fabricatur, sculpitur (*the idol*): nondum deus est; ecce plumbatur, construitur, erigitur; nec adhuc deus est; ecce ornatur, consecratur, oratur: tunc postremo deus est cum homo illum voluit et dedicavit." Minutius Felix, in *Octav.* c. xxiii. Cf. also St. Cyprian, *Adv. Jud.* l. iii; Origen, *Adv. Cels.* vii, etc.; Tertull., *Apologet.* c. xii; Euseb., *Praepar. Evang.* v, c. v; Irenæus, *Cont. Haeres.* iii, c. vi, etc.

[51] *Sat.* viii, l. i. "A fig-tree once was I, a useless trunk. The craftsman, uncertain as to whether to make a bench or a Priapus, decided in favor of the god. Hence a god I came forth, the terror of birds and thieves."

[52] Diog. Laertius, l. ii, c. xi, n. 116.

[53] Malala, *Pat. grecque*, xcvii, p. 320.

was introduced in order to lead the people back to righteous living. This was the worship of the Egyptian Isis. Unlike the sensuous rites of the old established divinities the worship of Isis promoted rather abstinence, purification, and correct morals, although even here immorality often gained the ascendancy. We read in Apuleius that Isis thus presents herself to her votaries: "I am the Mother of all things, the Mistress of the elements, the Original Principle of the ages, most exalted of the gods, Sovereign of the Manes, foremost among the celestial dwellers: gods and goddesses are but forms of me. . . . Sole divinity, I am adored throughout the vast universe under various names and forms, and by divers kinds of worship." [54] The same idea is thus found underlying all the worship of the ancient pagans.

As regards the Christian idea of image-worship we must note a gradual development. We have no authority for the assertion that the first Christians worshipped images with all the rites and ceremonies that now surround this devotion. In other words, we must distinguish between the making of sacred images and the veneration paid to them.[55]

[54] Apuleius, *Metamorph.*, xi, 5. And further: "Quum spatium saeculi tui permensus ad inferos demearis, ibi quoque in subterraneo semirotundo me . . . tibi propitiam frequens adorabis."

[55] Sacred images, however, certainly originated from an authoritative source, as Garrucci explains (*Storia dell'arte Crist.* t. i, lib. i, p. 5–6; ed. Prato, 1881). "Sacred pictures and sculptures should not be considered a mere abortion of depraved customs, or a relict of pagan usage. The fact that they are to be found in public as well as in private places is guarantee of this. For it proves that they were so ordered by those who stood in the position of authority in the Christian society, at that period of living Apostolic tradition and of unsullied faith. This also appears from the uniformity to be met with in these pictures, although tracing their origin to various nations and parts of the

Among the early converts there may have been at times a prejudice among the Jewish neophytes against the promiscuous display of images so common to Christian symbolism, although even of this there seems to be no authentic record. The fact is that at this period we find many Jews indulging in mural pictorial decoration in their burial places.[56]

The early Christians ever strove to honor their departed heroes to the best of their limited means. Piety and devotion often supplied a lack of artistic ability. Hence we find the examples of primitive Christian art to be frequently more commemorative of loving attachment and fond remembrance than indicative of special skill in the use of brush or chisel.

As the first Christians avoided association with the pagans in matters of religion, so they also scrupulously segregated their dead from contact with unbelievers. The Christians carefully shunned cremation which was practiced by unbelievers, and buried their deceased in graves or in underground vaults. At Rome, as is a matter of history, the pagans had erected their monuments to the dead all along the principal roads leading out from the city. The *Columbarium* was simply a vault with niches in the walls wherein were placed the sepulchral urns containing the ashes that were gathered up after cremation of the remains of the deceased. Busts of the dead were also frequently placed in niches. The Christians, burying their dead underground, excavated long galleries in the soft sandstone, or *tufo,* and lined these *ambulacri* with oblong

world. This uniformity is not easily intelligible, unless we admit that they originate from one and the same authoritative source."

[56] Cf. Leclercq, *Manuel,* etc., t. i, p. 495. Also Marucchi, *Guide des Cat. Rom.,* p. 267, seq.

receptacles, or *loculi,* in which the body of the deceased or the remains of a martyr, were placed intact. Here and there a crypt was excavated, wherein the Divine Mysteries were celebrated, prayers and hymns recited and sung, and the sacraments administered — all in time of persecution. The Christians did not, however, live in these subterranean passages.[57]

Now, from the very first dawn of Christianity in Rome, the artist was busy decorating the walls and ceilings of these crypts. The subjects at first chosen were taken from the Old or the New Testament. The object was purely to give vent to a pious devotion to surround the faithful departed with emblems and representations calculated to remind the living of faith in God, and in the resurrection of the body.[58]

Christian archæology has disproved the accusation formerly made that the early faithful eschewed images for fear of giving offence to the recent converts from

[57] "The history of the catacombs may be divided into many grand periods:

(1) In the beginning they were the property of noble persons.
(2) At the end of the second or the beginning of the third century many cemeteries belonged to the Christian community.
(3) The edict of Constantine (313) at Milan recognized definitely the Church as the proprietor of the cemeteries.
(4) From the fifth century to the end of the eighth the catacombs were exclusively sanctuaries, whither no one went except to pray over the tombs of the martyrs.
(5) At the end of the eighth century the popes endeavored to transfer the relics of the martyrs into the city.
(6) Abandoned during the Middle Ages, the catacombs were explored and studied in the sixteenth century." Marucchi, *Guide des Catacombes Romaines,* p. 2–4 (2d French ed.).

[58] A bronze image of Sts. Peter and Paul dating from about the second century, was found in Rome by Boldetti. Northcote and Brownlow remark: "Among all the variety of bronzes found in the Catacombs no examples have been reached of those little bronze idols which are so common in Roman ruins." *Christian Art,* t. ii, p. 283; ed. 1879.

either Judaism or any of the pagan cults. For the Catacombs of both Rome and Africa abound with pictures, symbolic representations, and various designs intended to appeal to the faith of the believer. There we see images of Christ,[59] the Blessed Virgin, the Apostles, the saints, even of the prophets, of Susanna, of Daniel in the lions' den, and many other scenes drawn from Scripture. The Christians seem moreover to have appropriated some of the symbols used by pagans; hence we frequently behold the palm and the peacock — both emblematic of immortality. The mystical vine mentioned in the Gospel[60] is often found; the Good Shepherd, Christ raising Lazarus to life, and the Savior being baptized by St. John.

By reason of the stringency of the *Lex arcani*[61] it was absolutely forbidden to cast before the pagan swine the precious pearl of the doctrine of the most Holy Eucharist. But pious ingenuity found a means of symbolic presentation which was wholly pervious to the initiated. In remembrance of Christ's appearance to the Apostles on the shores of the sea of Tiberias, when He stood before the affrighted fishermen, and "took bread, and gave to them, and fish in like manner,"[62] the fish and bread when placed on a tripod, came to represent the Food with which Christ nourishes the soul. This is a familiar figure in the paintings of the Roman catacombs, and is understood

[59] Cf. Palmer, *Introduction to Early Christian Symbolism;* Marucchi, passim; Garrucci, *Storia dell' arte Cristiana;* De Rossi, *Bollettino d'Archeologia Crist.;* Leclercq, *Manuel d'Archéologie Chrét;* Kraus, *Geschichte der Christlichen Kunst,* etc., etc.

[60] *John* xv, 5.

[61] This *Discipline of the Secret* never extended to sacred images. Cf. Garrucci, op. c. lib. viii, p. 436.

[62] *John* xxi, 13.

figuratively of the Divine banquet of the Holy Eucharist.[63]

It was noticed that the Greek word for fish — Ιχθὺς — when decomposed into its component letters contained the initials of the words, Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.[64] This then soon became the ordinary manner of referring, in symbol and painting, to the Sacrament of Baptism. The Fathers understood this thoroughly and referred to it frequently. About the third century Tertullian says: "We are little fishes as regards the Ιχθὺς, our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we are born."[65] This sign was also used to designate the Blessed Eucharist, and was engraved or painted on sarcophagi, *loculi*, on rings, lamps, and objects of every-day use. Frequently the fish was represented carrying in its mouth a small loaf of bread, thus referring again to the Bread of Life. Also we find it beside a dove, symbolizing the soul aspiring to heavenly rest. All these were not necessarily objects of worship, but merely pious decorations.

As the Church grew apace and the catacombs continued to be frequented, many other designs and pic-

[63] Marucchi, op. c. page 154, etc.

[64] ΙΗΣΟΤΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΘΕΟΤ ΤΙΟΣ ΣΟΤΗΡ. The famous inscription of Pectorius belonging to the third century was discovered by Card. Pitra, in 1839. It has the ΙΧΘΤΣ used as an acrostic of the first strophe. Cf. Battandier, *Vie du Card. Pitra*, p. 62. The Cardinal left a MS. volume of more than 800 pages on this word.

[65] "Nos pisciculi secundum ΙΧΘΤΝ nostrum Jesum Christum in quo nascimur." *De Bapt.* c. i. *P. L.* i, 1198. The idea evidently is that as fish are born in the water and cannot live without water, so Christians are born spiritually in Baptism, and without this saving water are dead. In a hymn attributed by some to Clement of Alexandria, and certainly dating from the earliest times, we find Christ called a fisher of men — ἁλιεὺς μερόπων, and Christians, pisces castos Ιχθὺς ἁγγοὺς. (Found at end of bk. iii, *Paedagog.* Ed. Venice (1757). Cf. also St. Greg. Naz. *Serm.* 37 (al. 31); Optat. Milev. iii, etc.

tures were introduced. We still behold paintings and frescos of numerous scenes from Scripture besides those mentioned. There are harts drinking from the fountain of living waters, Moses striking the rock — symbolic of grace which flows from the rock which is Christ[66] — sheep grazing, representing the faithful, the *orante,* or female figure with outstretched hands, typifying the Church. One of the oldest known symbolic representations of Christ crucified is that of a dolphin, fastened to the upright handle of an inverted trident.[67] Jonas is often presented; doves, emblematic of immortality; Noah and the ark, landscape with sheep gamboling about, symbols of the soul in paradise. We likewise find images of the bust of Christ, of St. Peter and St. Paul. These last three seem to have followed a fixed traditional type. It would involve a gigantic task to follow up the countless paintings of those early ages that attest at once the piety of the simple artist, and the faith that was then, as now, held by the Church.

Emerging from the catacombs into the open light of day we find the Fathers everywhere evidencing their belief in the lawful use and formation of sacred images.[68] A collection of testimonials taken from their writings would certainly fill several volumes. A few excerpts gleaned at random will show the almost universal custom of representing in fresco, statue, and painting, the various tenets of our belief.

It is certain that the Christians looked upon statues and images of idolatry with unmingled abhorrence

[66] I *Cor.* x, 4.

[67] Found in the cemetery of Callistus, Marucchi, *Guide,* p. 155.

[68] The discourse of the Deacon Epiphanius, in the vii Council, will repay perusal. *Act* vi, Mansi, xiii, 218–22.

and scorn. As St. Justin tells us, "the martyrs underwent every sort of torture and suffering rather than worship the pagan images or eat of food (*idolothyta*) that had been offered to idols." [69]

At the same time they clearly understood the difference between their own sacred images and the pagan idols. And yet they did not scruple to apply to religion some of the practices common to their pagan neighbors. On every hand they beheld tombs decorated with various pictures, paintings, marble bas-reliefs, and inscriptions. They soon learned to embellish their own burial places with similar ornamentation, but inspired from a Christian source. It was customary for pagans to carry in a ring the image of a friend,[70] although Clement of Alexandria tells us that Pythagoras had forbidden his disciples to wear rings, or to engrave on them the images of the gods.[71] The Christians soon adapted this custom to their own use and wore rings that bore the image of a dove, a fish, a ship, or an anchor — all Christian symbols.

Clement warns the faithful that they were not under any circumstances to depict the images of the gods. A fisherman who could afford the luxury of a ring was to remember the Apostles, evidently to have their images engraved thereon.[72] Tertullian mentions the

[69] *Dial. cum Tryphone*, n. 34. *P. G.* vi, 550.

[70] "Si quis habes nostris similes in imagine vultus

. . . . . .

In digito qui me fersque refersque tuo."

— Ovid, l. i, *Eleg.* vi.

[71] *Strom.* v, c. v. *P. G.* ix, 50.

[72] *Paedagogus*, iii, c. xi. *P. G.* viii, 634. On this subject there is an exhaustive article by the learned Dom Henri Leclercq in the *Dict. d'Archéol. Chrét.* t. i, s. v. *Anneaux*. Paris, 1906.

images of the Good Shepherd, engraved on the sacred vessels,[73] and this as an ordinary custom.[74]

These examples, as well as the pictures mentioned above, show that the early Christians had learned to depict scenes and incidents relating to their religion, but it does not follow that they had as yet begun to venerate them. This practice was gradually developed into a complete ritual as we have it to-day.

As regards statues, the primitive faithful have left us but very few memorials. In the first place, as St. Justin tells us in the second century, it was considered idolatrous to offer up victims to statues and images, or to place crowns upon them in the temples.[75] He declares that this custom of the pagans is blasphemous.[76]

Again, it was rather difficult in the first three centuries for Christians to indulge to any extent in the rather expensive luxury of statuary,[77] for they had but few large temples, and for the most part used simple

[73] There is a reference in Osee to the custom of wearing on the breast small images and lockets of the gods — a practice of idolaters, and taken up by the Jews whenever they lapsed from grace: "Auferat adulteria sua de medio uberum suorum." *Osee*, ii, 2.

[74] *De Pudicitia*, c. vii.

[75] "Neque enim victimarum copia, et florum coronis colimus quos homines, postquam effinxere et in fanis collocavere, deos appellarunt." I *Apolog. P. G.* vi, 339. As late as the fourth century we read of riotous scenes in Alexandria where the bishop, Theophilus, at the emperor's order, destroyed the pagan statues. One statue was left standing in the public square as a proof to future generations that statues were formerly adored by the Alexandrians. Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. v, c. xvi.

[76] "O vos stupidos, qui ab hominibus obscaenis deos quos adoratis fingi refingique creditis." Origen expresses the same idea, in *Rom.* i, 25. *P. G.* xi, 425–6.

[77] "Les statues chrétiennes sont fort rares dans les trois premiers siècles. La plus ancienne que nous connaissions est la groupe de Panéade." Marucchi, *Éléments d'Arch. Chrét.* t. i, p. 335.

oratories in private houses or crypts in the catacombs. Still, the same principle applied to statues as to images, and the one was quite as lawful as the other. Even if no examples were found, it would still remain true that the mere absence of either image or statue never could be construed as an argument against the lawful right and principle which sanctions both kinds of representation — a right and a principle which rest upon higher grounds than mere concrete examples or practices.

We have an instance, related by Eusebius,[78] which seems to offer evidence that statues were to be found commemorating Sacred history. This historian tells us that at Cæsarea Philippi there was a bronze group which tradition held represented Christ[79] and the woman He had healed of the flow of blood.[80] She is generally referred to by the Fathers as the Hemorrhoissa. In this group was a bronze figure of a woman kneeling, and extending her hands in suppliant attitude towards the figure of a man, garbed in a long, flowing mantle, who reached out his hand towards her. This group was found beside the entrance to the house formerly belonging to the Hemorrhoissa. Eusebius testifies that he beheld this group with his own eyes. He goes on also to narrate wonderful

[78] Dr. Schaff seems unable to overcome the temptation to join those writers who hate to admit this tradition handed down by Eusebius, and think that this statue *probably* was, "of Hadrian or some other emperor," to whom the Phœnicians, in the form of a woman, did honor! Funny that they chose such a spot, as even Schaff admits. *Hist. Ch. Church*, iii, 566.

[79] In spite of those writers who fancy this statue represents some Roman emperor, the consensus of opinion is against them. This fact is mentioned also by Sozomenus, as related below. In the Seventh Council Epiphanius says: "The story of the Hemorrhoissa has the testimony of several historians." Act. vi; Mansi, *Coll. Conc.* t. xiii, 267.

[80] *Matt.* ix, 20–2.

cures effected by the use of a certain herb which grew at the base of the statue. He adds moreover that the Christians copied from the pagans the practice of erecting statues and pictures of Christ and the saints, just as the pagans were wont to honor their heroes. From this remark we observe that the Christian practice was confined to the erection of statues and the painting of images to honor the saints, not to adore them. He says that he had seen pictures, in various tints and colors, of St. Peter and St. Paul, and of Christ.[81]

In his life of Constantine, Eusebius often speaks of the statues erected by that pious emperor. Constantine purged the city on the Bosporus of idols, and raised statues of Christ, as also large brazen statues of Daniel and the lions, and ornamented them with plates of gold. Nay, he had a magnificent cross wrought in gold and precious stones and placed at the entrance to the palace.[82] Statues of the Good Shepherd were likewise used as ornaments around the fountains in the public squares. In the sixteenth century a statue of St. Hippolytus, dating from the third century, was found in Rome, in the cemetery bearing the Saint's name. It is now in the Lateran Museum.[83]

[81] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* vii, c. xiv. Ed. Cologne, 1570. In narrating this fact Sozomenus adds that when Julian the apostate learned of this statue erected by the pious woman, he ordered it removed and replaced by his own. Julian's statue was then struck in the breast by lightning, the head hurled to the ground, and entirely blackened. The pagans placed a rope about the statue of Christ, dragged it through the city, and broke it in pieces. The Christians gathered up the fragments, and placed them in the church, where they were preserved up to the time of Sozomenus. Soz. *H. E.* v. c. xx. Ed. Colog., 1570.

[82] *De Vita Constant,* iii, c. xlviii. Ed. cit.

[83] Marucchi, *Éléments,* i. 338. He thinks the statue of St. Peter now in St. Peter's, Rome, dates from the fifth century. This famous statue of St. Hippolytus was found in the Gori

From what has been said it may be seen that even in the ages of persecution sacred images were by no means uncommon. After the era of peace was inaugurated under Constantine these images began to be looked upon with more reverence, and a certain devotion was gradually introduced which embraced the Catholic Church throughout the world. Full liberty was afforded the erstwhile hounded faithful to give free vent to their love of the martyrs. From now on the churches and private houses of wealthy Christians became veritable museums of sacred art.[84] Although prejudiced writers affirm that the devotion to images arose in the fourth century, we have seen that it was but a new phase of the development that was setting in, and that shaped more than one doctrine into definite, compact form.

We have but meager information as to the manner in which the first believers reverenced their sacred images. We do know, however, that they paid them a certain well-defined respect. "The etiquette of the Byzantine court gradually evolved elaborate forms of respect, not only for the person of Cæsar but even for his statues and symbols. It would be natural that people who bowed to, kissed, incensed the imperial eagles and images of Cæsar (with no suspicion of

vineyard, in Rome. This statue bears the date 222, the first year of the reign of Alexander Severus. Marucchi, *Guide*, p. 297.

[84] The house of Sts. John and Paul, brothers martyred at Rome under Julian, is a fine example of this. Cf. *La Casa Celimontana*, ecc. by Padre Germano, Rome, 1894. So also John the Deacon tells us that Severus, Bishop of Naples (in the IV century), erected several basilicas, among them one in the city. He calls it a wonderful piece of work (*mirifica operatio*), and adds that in the apse was a mosaic of the Savior seated in the midst of the twelve Apostles, and beneath Him were the figures of four prophets wrought out of precious marble. Muratori, *Rer. Ital.* i, p. 2.

anything like idolatry), who paid elaborate reverence to an empty throne as his symbol, should give the same signs to the cross, the images of Christ, and the altar.[85]

Beginning with the era of Constantine we find the Fathers of the Church more outspoken in regard to these sacred emblems. St. Basil, in his eulogy of St. Barlaam the martyr, addresses the painters: "Arise, O distinguished artists! Perfect this poor word picture of the noble martyr. With deft stroke depict in vivid color the triumphs of this valiant athlete. Let him stand forth to the gaze a victorious champion. On your storied canvas depict also Christ, the Head of the martyrs." [86]

St. John Chrysostom exclaims: "I loved a certain waxen image as a very font of piety: I seemed to see therein an angel overthrowing the hordes of barbarians." [87]

St. Cyril of Alexandria describes a pious image which he had seen of a martyr in the arena, and declares that he could not restrain his tears at the touching spectacle.[88]

St. Gregory of Nyssa repudiates the thought of idolatry in his worship of images, by declaring: "We adore Christ, not the material ingeniously worked out in His image." [89]

In the West the same spirit is early prevalent in

[85] Dr. Fortescue, in *Cath. Encyclop.*, t. vii, p. 667.

[86] *Orat. in S. Barlaam*, n. 3. *P. G.* xxxi, 490.

[87] *Serm.* i, *De Div. Utriusque Test. Loc.* He praises the people of Antioch for having pictures of St. Melotius on the walls of their houses, on rings, and on other objects. *Orat. in S. Melot.*

[88] "Vidi in pariete picturam, puellam in stadio decertantem: nec licuit sine lacrymis spectaculum contueri." Quoted by St. Theod. Stud. *ep.* xxxvi, l. ii.

[89] Ab eodem, *ep.* cxcix, l. ii.

regard to images. As the worship of idols was the counterpart of Christianity and its greatest contrast, so the destruction of these was looked upon as a sort of preparation for profession in the Christian faith St. Jerome, writing to Laeta, a noble Roman matron married to a pagan of high degree, and exhorting her to trust in the future conversion of her spouse, proposes the example of her distinguished relative, the Prefect Gracchus. "Did not your noble kinsman, a few years ago, while Prefect of the city, overturn, destroy, and reduce to fragments the shrine of Mithras, with its idols, and on the strength of these hostages, so to say, obtain the baptism of Christ?"[90] The holy Doctor also remarks on the fact that the city was deserted by the gods, who had been relegated to the society of owls and birds of ill omen, whereas the military banners, as well as the purple of royalty and the monarch's crown were emblazoned with the cross of Christ.[91]

In regard to the cross it may be well to remark that the primitive Christians almost invariably refrained from representing Christ in agony. The crucifixion was sedulously depicted in symbol and figure. The cross itself at first assumed various forms. Although some early Fathers tell us that it was found throughout the different walks of life — in the plough, on various implements, the sails of a ship, the human body [92]— and Christians were sometimes styled cross-worshippers,[93] still down to the fifth century it was

[90] *Ad Laetam, ep.* cvii: *P. L.* t. xxii.
[91] Ibid.
[92] St. Justin, *Dialog. cum Tryph.*, n. 91.
[93] Tertull., *Apol.* xv. Cf. also accusation made by Julian against the Christians on the same grounds. St. Cyril A. *Adv. Jul.* vi.

more frequently expressed under the symbolic anchor, the trident, the so-called *crux gammata,* ☬ (from the Greek double gamma), and the famous *chi-rho* monogram of Constantine. ☧[94] In the first part of the fifth century, when Christianity was freed from all further danger of pagan opposition, the cross was universally used as the symbol of redemption. Still, however, even earlier, we learn from Tertullian that it was in frequent use among the faithful as a sign with which they marked their brows before attending to any work or duty;[95] and St. Gregory Nazianzen admonished the faithful to use it as a preventive against sudden anger.[96] We read also that when the workmen attempted to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem at the command of Julian, small crosses appeared on their garments.

It was however, as we said, the era of peace and the glorious apparition of the cross to Constantine that brought in a universal and triumphant use of the cross on all occasions.[97] About the seventh century

[94] P. Germano, op. cit., p. 429. This form was used before the era of Constantine. After this era the form was continued as a decoration, but slightly altered to ☧. For further particulars regarding the *crux gammata,* or swastika, see *Cath. Encyclop.* iv, p. 517–22. Also Garrucci, *Storia,* ecc. t. i, lib. iii, p. 170; and lib. viii, p. 438.

[95] "Ad omnem progressum atque promotum, ad omnem aditum et exitum, ad calceatum et lavacra, ad menses (*sic*), ad lumina, ad cubilia, ad sedilia, quaecumque nos conversatio exercet, frontem crucis signaculo terimus." *De Cor. Milit.,* c. iii.

[96] "Signare mox te sis memor sancta cruce,
Quam cuncta metuunt, ac tremunt: qua preside
Adversus omnes semper usum me scio."
Carm. *adv. Iram,* xxv, 418–20, t. ii. Ed. Paris, 1842.
Julian the Apostate when taken by sudden fear, made the sign of the cross, and the demons at once disappeared. Soz. *H. E.* v, c. ii.

[97] The apparition of the cross, though confirmed by Eusebius, is thought by a few writers to refer to the dream in which Constantine again beheld the cross.

it became customary to represent Christ on the cross, and thus we have the beginning of the use of the crucifix. At first the Savior was depicted in glorious form, as a triumphant victor; later on, the crucifix, as we now have it, came into use.[98]

Now, it is only fair to state that even in early times there was some, at least apparent, opposition shown towards the worship of images. But this spirit was manifested by but a few, and even then it is not always clear just what they meant.

One of the best known cases in point is that of St. Epiphanius, in the fourth century. He tells us that on entering a certain church he saw a veil hanging before the door, and on the veil was the figure of a man; he does not remember whether of Christ or of some saint. Indignant at what he considered impious he tore down the veil, and ordered the custodian of the church to use the veil as a burial shroud for some poor person.[99] The Calvinists made much ado over this fact. It proves, however, very little, if anything, against the lawful use of images. For in the first place the letter of St. Epiphanius was written in Greek, and then translated into Latin by St. Jerome, the original Greek copy being lost. Moreover, it is quite possible that abuses may have crept into local churches, even at that early period, in regard to holy images. That abuses did creep in shortly afterward we shall see in the next chapter. This abuse might urge a zeal-

[98] Cf. *Cath. Encyc.* s. v. *Cross.*

[99] *Ep.* lx inter ep. S. Hieron. Schaff styles the Saint, "a narrow fanatic." Op. et. l. cit.— St. John Damascene seems to think that this work is unauthentic (*De Imag.* part ii, p. 77, Eng. tr.). He adds nevertheless that St. Epiphanius may have done this to avoid local abuses, just as St. Athanasius ordered relics of the Saints buried to obviate abuses on the part of the Egyptians, who paid excessive devotion to the dead.

ous prelate in certain circumstances to show perhaps excessive zeal and fervor in denouncing the abuse, as in the case of Serenus, bishop of Marseilles. So we are scarcely justified in pronouncing judgment on this isolated fact of a man whom the Church honors with the appellation of Saint.[100] In any case, one or two instances are surely not sufficient to overturn the vast volume of tradition on the subject.

Again, many writers urge the fact of the now famous thirty-sixth canon of the Council of Elvira, held in Spain, about the year 303. In this synod, which was merely a local assembly, we read: "It is decreed that pictures should not be in the churches; and that that which is worshipped and adored must not be painted on walls." [101]

Various explanations have been given to elucidate the cause of such a decree in Spain, and in the fourth century. Some writers, as Bellarmine and Suarez,[102]

[100] Card. Toleti thinks that the Saint was actuated by the same motive as Ezechias (IV *Kings,* xviii, 4) in destroying the brazen serpent which Moses had erected, and which the Jews afterward made an object of idolatry. Toleti, in P. iii, q. xxv, a. iii. There were surely other abuses at the same time, as appears from several decrees.

[101] "Placuit, picturas esse in ecclesia non debere; neque quod colitur, et adoratur, in parietibus depingatur." Mansi, *Coll. Conc.* t. ii, col. ii.

[102] Bellarm., *De Imagin.* ii, c. ix. Suarez, t. i, *Disput.* liii, sect. i. Bellarminus also adds the reason, that it was judged well to avoid desecration of the images. He says, moreover, that since this provincial council seems to have erred in denying Communion to certain sinners, even at the hour of death, it can scarcely merit absolute faith on this point. Bottari (*Sculture e Pitture Sacre,* t. i, p. 106) agrees with the above writers, adding that it was customary with the Christians to paint images on the diptychs, thus the more easily to carry them in time of persecution. (Apud Gaume, *Les trois Rome,* t. iv, p. 246). Cardinal Newman (*Development,* part ii, ch. 10) thought that the council hereby gave notice that the saints and angels, not their images, were to be honored.

hold that the idea was to avoid the danger of exposing the sacred images to ridicule and contempt on the part of pagans in case the Christians were obliged to suddenly flee in time of persecution. For the common opinion is that this council was held just before the abdication of Diocletian (305). Others thought that the object was to obviate any difficulty that might arise in the minds of the pagans, thinking that we worshipped a material and visible God.[103] Others again get around the difficulty by simply rejecting the canon as an interpolation.[104] But this opinion is untenable without positive proof. The view that seems most prevalent now is that this canon was simply a disciplinary measure, intended to correct certain abuses or advanced ideas on the subject of image-worship.[105] Another reason which may be adduced is that, as we have seen, the elaborate ceremonial of practices relating to image-worship grew up much faster in the East than it did in the West. Hence it is not at all improbable that some such practice or seemingly extravagant method of worship may have been imported into the West by Christians who had become conversant with Eastern modes of honoring images and persons, and thus shocked the calmer manners of the West. Just as the Frankish bishops in the eighth century were shocked at the apparently excessive worship paid to images in the East — a worship which seemed to their more sedate temperaments as bordering on the unlawful — so, too, the Synod of

[103] Albaspineus, Bishop of Orleans, in notes on this Council. Mansi, l. c. col. 46. He thinks there is no question of saints or angels.

[104] Battaglini, *Istoria Univers. di. tutti i Conc.*, an. 305, p. 38. (Apud Gaume, l. c. p. 245.)

[105] Cf. *Hist. des Conciles*, Hefele-Leclercq, h. l.

Elvira may have detected what they considered an abuse in this matter.

At any rate, whichever way we look at the decree, we must admit that a local synod of nineteen bishops and twenty-six priests could scarcely legislate authoritatively for the whole Church.[106]

Besides the cases quoted, we find here and there certain writers and even prelates opposing the use of images. It may as well be said once for all, however, that to understand the writings of the Fathers — to interpret their minds as revealed in what they wrote — it is necessary to view their works under the light of local customs, traditions, and particular circumstances. Just as the devil himself can quote Scripture to advantage, so can a novice in patristic studies quote objections to almost any known doctrine of religion. This, however, is not what the Catholic Church understands when she uses the word, tradition. To her mind tradition is represented by the universal and practically unanimous consent of the Fathers on any given point of doctrine — a tradition that agrees with her own teaching at all times. A discordant note uttered by any one individual will never possess sufficient volume or strength to affect the magnificent harmony resulting from the unison of patristic voices. That this unison is found on the subject of holy images we have endeavored to show. It now remains to consider briefly one more objection which is brought forward by not a few writers of distinction among those outside the Church.

We are told that about the seventh century Pope

[106] Cf. Nat. Alexander, *H. E.* Dissert. xxi, art. ii, for lengthy discussion of various opinions (in t. iv, p. 141, seq; ed. Venice, 1778). See also Garrucci, *Storia*, ecc. t. i, lib. viii, p. 436.

Gregory the Great approved of the action of Bishop Serenus in destroying images in his church.[107] This charge has often been ably refuted. Suffice it to say that from the Pope's own words we gather the full meaning of the Pontiff's intention. "It has recently been brought to our attention that on seeing certain persons adoring images you have taken the images from the church, broken them in pieces, and cast them out. We indeed praise your zeal for having thus taken measures to prevent the adoration of any object made by hands. But we also must say that you should not have broken the images. For the object in placing pictures in the church is that the illiterate may at least read in paintings what they are unable to comprehend in books. Your Excellency, therefore, should have preserved the pictures and have checked the people from adoring them; so that both the ignorant might have an opportunity of learning the facts of history, and the people be restrained from adoring an image."[108] We cannot well wish for a clearer exposition of the doctrine on sacred images than that given by Pope Gregory in the above, and in his other letters to Serenus and to Secundinus.

The other difficulties raised by Blunt and others in regard to Tertullian, Origen and a few other Fathers seem too puerile to need serious refutation at this late day.

[107] Blunt, *Dict. of Sects, Heresies,* etc., s. v. Iconoclasts.

[108] *Ep. ad Serenum,* lib. ix, c. 105. *P. L.* lxxvii, 1027–8. See also letter to Secundinum, l. c. 990. He sums up: "Scio quidem quod imaginem Salvatoris nostri non ideo petis, ut quasi Deum colas, sed ob recordationem Filii Dei in ejus amore recalescas, cujus te imaginem videre desideras." The holy Pontiff expresses the same idea in his other letter to Serenus, *ep.* xiii, col. 1128–30. He lays stress on the fact that the painting of images in holy places was with good reason handed down from antiquity.

Summing up therefore the question of images in the first centuries of Christianity we have seen briefly that the Church from the very beginning sanctioned the making of images; that a development gradually set in, much the same as in other matters of faith, but always based on first principles of doctrine; and finally, that as devotion succeeded mere respect, so veneration eventually gave shape and form and liturgical significance to the practice of worshipping those pious representations of Christ, His Blessed Mother, and the Saints and Angels.

In the words of St. Theodore the Studite, speaking of the teaching of the Apostles and the Fathers: "He who denies (*this doctrine of sacred images*) stands condemned, and is anathema. For he does not believe as did the Apostles and the Fathers. He is faithless, and wrongly bears the name of Christian." [109]

[109] *Ref. Poem. Iconomach.*, n. 28.

CHAPTER III

THE WORSHIP OF SACRED IMAGES

From the Seventh Century to the Present.

I am at home here in my Father's house!
These paintings of the Saints upon the walls
Have all familiar and benignant faces.
— *Longfellow.*[1]

The various heresies that arose from time to time in the early ages of the Church had an influence, direct or otherwise, on the worship of Images. Where these denials of some point of received doctrine did not actually attack the veneration of such pious representations, they did, by inference, reject the possibility or lawfulness of such veneration. Thus the sectaries who attacked the divinity of Christ, as the Nestorians, or anything concerning His two natures, as the Monothelites, naturally rejected all pious attempts to depict as divine One whom they looked upon as but human. In this they were at variance with the Carpocratian branch of the Gnostics in the second century. These strange fanatics, as St. Irenæus tells us, not only made images of Christ, but blending paganism and a misguided zeal for the teachings of the Savior, they placed these paintings together with those of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, and other philosophers, and after crowning them all, offered up divine worship to

[1] *Golden Legend*, p. 3.

them after the manner of the pagans towards their gods. These sectarians moreover held that Pilate had caused a painting of Christ to be made.[2]

Again. Abuses had crept in at various times; so much so, that St. Augustine admits the fact of certain ignorant Christians even adoring pictures and tombs.[3] We have seen in the preceding chapter other incidents that point out conclusively that the worship of images was not precisely a subject of universal legislation in the very early period of Christianity; that on the contrary, here and there a voice was raised in protest, probably at sight of local abuses.

It seems however that these abuses grew more rapidly in the East than in the West. Besides the natural proclivity of the Oriental temperament to exaggerate in matters of religion where sentiment might possibly play a conspicuous part, there were other and far different causes at work in the empire on the Bosporus, that soon brought forth rabid persecutors on the one hand, and heroic champions on the other.

Although admitting that things had certainly progressed there to an extent where at least legislative regulation would seem to have been profitable, we cannot subscribe to the opinion expressed by such writers as Mosheim, who in his hatred towards sacred images gives vent to his ill-concealed spleen against the Roman Pontiffs.[4]

In order to understand the great controversy that agitated all Christendom, and especially the Eastern Church, in the eighth century, it is necessary to take

[2] St Irenæus, *Adv. Haeres.* l. i, c. xxv, n. 6. *P. G.* vii, 685.

[3] "Novi multos esse sepulcrorum et picturarum adoratores." *De Mor. Eccl.* l. i, c. 34. *P. L.* xxxii, 1342. He is speaking to the Manichees, who accused the Christians of many vices.

[4] Mosheim, *Eccl. Hist.* b. iii, p. ii, ch. iii. Eng. tr.

into account the nature of Oriental peoples, who are more prone to externalize inward affection by a profusion of outward ceremonies than are the relatively more phlegmatic nations of Europe. An Oriental would consider himself deficient in obsequiousness towards an honored guest if he failed to manifest all those signs of attachment and marks of respect which even now are practiced by the East and often ridiculed by the West. But even at this time changes had come into the polity of the empire.

After Constantine transferred the seat of government to the shores of Byzantium, the West seems to have declined in more ways than one. Together with the capital of empire went also that unwritten code of etiquette, refinement, and courtly manners, as well as all those niceties of polite life, that ever surround the throne of royalty among civilized and cultured nations. In the West a new order of things was being inaugurated. The aristocracy had been practically swept away. Forest chieftains accustomed to the manners of wild life were now seen in the palaces of the Cæsars, the forums, the baths, and in all public places. With the proud disdain of an alien, as well as of a barbarous and triumphant race, these haughty conquerors sneered at the soft effeminacy that characterized their newly acquired subjects. A line of demarcation was long visible between the former abode of Roman magnificence and the new court redolent of the manners of the forest and the mountain. This new spirit was soon reflected in the life of the nation, and there arose a different viewpoint as regards royalty and the ceremonies connected with its honor.

In the East, however, ceremonious obsequiousness was of the most vital importance in matters pertaining

to the monarch. Bowing, prostrating the person, kissing the royal hand, and other like marks of obeisance were parts of ordinary usages among the Orientals. These various manifestations of respect, as we have seen, soon were transferred to the images, statues, and other representations or objects relating to the emperor. Since Christ was their grand King, the Saints, their valiant heroes, it was most natural to make use of all the marks accorded royalty, and to transfer them, intensified, to those objects of spiritual veneration. All this frequently degenerated into abuses here and there as the lowly and the ignorant often came to look upon these pictures as possessing marvellous properties and virtues.

To add to the danger of exaggeration there were various traditions concerning certain pictures that were said to have been made without hands, or in some miraculous manner.[5] The most famous of these, perhaps, was that said to have been sent by Christ to King Abgar, at Edessa.[6] Then again there were pictures of the Blessed Virgin ascribed to the brush of St. Luke. Many of these have been recognized by modern critics as belonging to the period between the fifth and the seventh centuries.[7] There was also a tradition to the effect that a Persian king on hearing of the birth of

[5] These were called, *εἰκόνες ἀχειροποίηται* and were centers of peculiar devotions.

[6] We have this legend in the West under the name of Veronica's (*vera εἰκὼν*) towl. Cf. Leclercq, in *Dict. d'Archéol. Chrét.* s. v. *Abgar*. This legend belongs, probably, to the III century, i. e., in regard to Abgar. It is often mentioned by the Fathers. The devotion towards it was vouched for in the VIII century by Leo, Lector of Constantinople, in the Council of 787. Mansi, xiii, c. 191 (*act.* v).

[7] These facts are all too well known to need further elucidation. Marucchi thinks that the *Volto Santo*, now at Rome, is anterior to the fifth century. *Éléments*, i, 102.

Christ in Bethlehem, sent a famous painter thither to paint the portraits of Mother and Child.[8] Such impetus therefore was given in certain quarters to the devotion towards the images of the Saints, that this devotion became a matter of every day life. Lights and perfumes were placed before the icons. They were employed to repel invaders, to assist in resisting a besieging army,[9] to cause water to gush forth from a well that had refused to yield water,[10] and in countless other cases.[11] Thus the popular notion and belief attributed almost unlimited powers of impetration to the saints through their images. In very truth at this late day, we find it difficult to state precisely how far the popular idea on this subject really progressed.

The multiplication of sacred images became universal. We find them everywhere: in houses, workshops, the theater, the hippodrome, on garments, utensils, tools, cups; in every nook and corner in public and in private an icon presided. They were taken on journeys as safeguards; they were even at times, it seems, used in place of godparents at baptism. For St. Theodore of the Studion, writing to John Spatharius who had used the image of St. Demetrius in place of a godfather in baptism, praises this act in the highest terms.[12] The churches were filled with sacred images from floor to roof.[13] Incense was offered before them, candles lighted, people knelt in their pres-

[8] St. Nicephorus, *Antirrh.* iii, n. 43. *P. G.* t. 100, col. 462.
[9] Mansi, *Coll. Conc.* l. c.
[10] Ibid. col. 194.
[11] See some curious examples apud Mansi, l. c. col. 194–5.
[12] L. 1, *ep* 17. *P. G.* xcix, 962.
[13] This is also true to a certain extent of the churches in the West at a later period. As witness the church of St. Maria Antiqua, in Rome, dating from about the seventh century, and others of an earlier date.

ence; they kissed the images, placed their hands upon them as upon the Gospel in taking an oath, and in every possible way sought to express sentiments of affection and of submission before these icons which they held in such high veneration.

Now, in admitting all these practices we are apt to fall into the error of accusing the Catholics of the East at that time of idolatry pure and unvarnished. We have no warrant whatsoever to do this, at least speaking of the Eastern Church as a whole. That some few simple-minded, ignorant peasants may have had confused ideas as to where simple veneration ended and idolatry began it is not impossible to conceive. Even this as a general practice cannot be proven. Much less is it true to say that, "nearly the whole of religion in this century consisted in the worship of images." [14]

At the same time it cannot be denied that an immense development had taken place in regard to image-worship. It was a lawful development, however, sanctioned by the Church, and upheld by many learned men, as St. Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, St. John Damascene, St. Theodore Studite, and others, although St. Theodore approves of certain practices which in our time would seem strange. In order to prove, however, that these practices were really unlawful, it would be necessary to demonstrate that the principle which inspired them, and the intention which animated them, were also wrong. This does not appear to be the fact, since they were all based on the grand principle — which is the fundamental one with the defenders of images in that period — that the

[14] Schlegel, apud Mosheim, *Instit. of Eccl. Hist.*, ii, p. 38, note to Eng. ed. 1849.

honor shown an image reverts essentially to its prototype. Yet, in regard to the miraculous icons, called ἀχειροποίηται the popular devotion seems at times to have soared as high as possible within the bounds of legitimate worship.

Events had reached this stage in the East when a line of impious emperors sought to make political capital out of a persecution directed towards this widespread practice of image-worship. The actual origin and real causes of this persecution are not perfectly clear, as historians do not agree as to the truth of certain facts which accompany the beginning of the opposition manifested by the emperors. The following account, however, is accepted as true with regard to the facts it states.

In the year 723 Yezid, the Arabian Caliph at Damascus, ordered all images venerated by his Christian subjects to be destroyed.[15] The Jews and Mohammedans, who vied with one another in their hatred of images, hastened to execute this order. The Christians refused to acquiesce in this impious decree, and many fled. The Jews and Arabs, united in their opposition to the Christians, carried out the order with a ferocious fidelity. Images everywhere throughout the jurisdiction of the Caliph were burned, and the churches either destroyed, or the walls whitewashed to remove the hated icons. Yezid died less than three years after this event, and under his son and successor sacred images once more rose to their place of honor.

[15] It is said he was urged by a Jewish magician named Sarantapechys to do this. The latter promised the Caliph a long reign, and a life of happiness. On the Caliph's death shortly afterwards, his son ordered the Jew put to death. This is given in the VII Council as the origin of the persecution. Act. v, *Joan Monach.* Mansi, xiii, 198–9.

All this trouble in Syria was a sort of prelude to the grand upheaval in the empire.

It was not long before Constantine, the deposed bishop of Nacolia in Phrygia, made his way to the court of Constantinople. Here he sought to influence the emperor, Leo the Isaurian (716–41), against the worship of images. In this evil design he was ably seconded by the Jews, who were ever the sworn enemies of image-worship among Christians. The emperor at this time was contemplating a general reform throughout the empire. He noticed the violent antagonism between Christians and unbelievers on the subject of holy images. He also noted that even among the Christians here and there a divergence of opinion existed. Constantine of Nacolia worked on this doubt in the emperor's mind until Leo was convinced, or pretended as much, that the First Commandment really forbade images of all kinds.

Here it may be well to remark that the East ever chafed under its forced submission to the Bishop of Old Rome. Patriarchs and emperors at various times strove to break away from their allegiance, or at least to minimize the Pope's influence. In this they were ever met with gentleness mingled with inflexible firmness on the part of the successors of St. Peter. So Leo's attempt at reform aimed at a consolidation of as much power as possible in Constantinople — and this in spiritual as well as in temporal matters.

Leo therefore gave ear to the pleading and the arguments brought to bear upon him by Constantine. Thus in the year 726 he issued a decree ordering the removal of all holy images throughout the empire. He forwarded the decree to Pope Gregory II, that it might be everywhere followed and obeyed in Italy.

In the meantime Leo gathered together the dignitaries of the city, harangued them on orthodoxy, declaring that up to his time all former Christians — kings, bishops, and faithful — were idolaters. The audience groaned at this haughty denunciation, and refused to be convinced. On the contrary, a terrific upheaval followed. The people rose in fury. The emperor, who had with the usual and traditional audacity of the Eastern Court dared to legislate in matters of religion, now became frightened at the result of his words: which seems to prove that he did not act on firm conviction. He sought to mitigate the evil by assuring the people that they had misinterpreted his words, that his only intention was to order the pictures hung up higher so that the people could not reach them. This referred to the Greek custom of bowing before the image and kissing it, a practice which we have described as *προσκύνησις*.

In the meantime Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, resorted to every argument to dissuade the emperor from his impious enterprise. He quoted Scripture, Fathers, Tradition, and reminded the emperor of his coronation oath not to meddle in affairs of religion. But all to no purpose. The holy patriarch then endeavored to win back Constantine of Nacolia, and had apparently succeeded. He charged this latter to deliver a letter on the subject, written by the patriarch himself, to the Metropolitan, John of Synnada, who was Constantine's ecclesiastical superior. But the recalcitrant Constantine failed to deliver the letter, and was suspended by the patriarch.[16]

[16] Germanus wrote two other letters in defence of images, one of which was to Thomas of Claudiopolis; the latter being an iconoclast, paid little heed to the holy patriarch.

Events now marched along in rapid and bloody succession. Leo set fire to the imperial college, and destroyed it together with the professors, who were strenuous defenders of the true faith.[17] He ordered torn down the famous statue of the Savior which had stood for a long time over the bronze gate of the city. The populace, infuriated at this new desecration, wreaked vengeance on all those who had anything to do with the sacrilege. Leo had the rioters put to the sword.[18]

Germanus had written to Gregory II an account of the proceedings. The Pope now writes to Leo, who had demanded an Ecumenical Council. The pontiff warns him to desist, tells him a council is not necessary, and advises him to attend to affairs of state, and leave the Church to the prelates. Leo retaliates by sending the Pope's messengers into exile, and threatening to send an armed force to Rome to destroy the famous statue of St. Peter, and to lead Gregory himself into exile.

During an argument with Germanus, Leo won his point by striking the holy patriarch with his fist, driving him away, and appointing the deacon Anastasius, who was the patriarchal Syncellus, in his place. This happened when Germanus refused to take part in an assembly of apostate prelates whom Leo had convoked in a pseudo-council.[19] Germanus was deposed, therefore, sent to a monastery, and some time afterward

[17] In this fire 303,000 volumes were destroyed.

[18] As the monks seem to have been the chief promoters of image-worship they were the peculiar object of Leo's fury. Among the persons who suffered on this occasion are numbered some women. The Greek Church honors their memory as martyrs.

[19] In this gathering Germanus renounced his insignia of office and left the place.

the holy old man, now a centenarian, was strangled by Leo's order. Pope Gregory held a synod of Roman bishops, in which he condemned both Leo and Anastasius as heretics, the former also as a disturber of religion, and the latter as a usurper.[20]

About this time a valiant champion arose to defend the old doctrine of the Church. This man was St. John Damascene, so-called after the place of his birth. His father was chief councillor to the Caliph of Damascus, and was a devout Christian. On his death the son succeeded to this honorable position.[21] St. John was a man of brilliant parts, highly educated, and instructed in the learning of East and West.[22] He had a profound grasp of Christian philosophy and theology, and soon set about the defence of image-worship. He wrote three Apologies, "against those who condemn the holy icons."[23] He takes up the question from a theological viewpoint.

He begins by accepting the teaching of the Church as his foundation. He argues that Latria belongs to God alone, and explains at great length the difference between this supreme worship and the inferior kind, or dulia. He accuses those who permit images only of Christ and His Mother, as attacking the Communion of Saints, whereas, the Apostle says that if "we are sons, therefore heirs also through God." "If the friends of God have shared in the sufferings of

[20] Zonaras, *Annal.* l. xv, n. 4. *P. G.* cxxxiv, 1323.

[21] He afterwards entered the celebrated monastery of Mar Saba.

[22] Cf. Rohrbacher, *Hist. Univers.* l. 51.

[23] Migne, *P. G.* xciv, 1231–1420. It is worthy of note that when the tradition of the Church in regard to holy images is attacked, we behold East and West in perfect accord in defending the apostolic teaching: St. Gregory in Rome, St. Germanus at Constantinople, and St. John Damascene in Syria.

Christ, why should they not also share in His glory even on earth?" He then goes on to quote a large number of arguments from the Fathers.

In his Second Apology he attacks the Manicheans, who held that all matter is bad, and that consequently images, relics, even the Cross itself, should not even be respected in the least way. He insists again on the distinction of Latria and Dulia, and adduces more patristic testimonies.

In the Third Apology he goes deeply into the meaning of the words image and worship. He reduces his arguments to five heads under each term, and explains six different kinds of images, going back to the very origin of the meaning of the word image, which he says is the "natural image." "The Son is the first natural and unchangeable image of the invisible God, the Father, showing the Father in Himself." He explains eight different ways in which the word adoration is taken, and concludes with a vast number of arguments from the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.

But to return to the events in the persecution. When the people in the West heard of the audacity of the Greek emperor and his edict against holy images, there were uprisings throughout Italy. This was aggravated by the fact that ever since Constantine transferred the seat of government to Byzantium the subjects of the empire in the West felt in a way as if they had been abandoned and left to their fate. This feeling was intensified as the years passed. For the barbarians and the Mohammedans kept the emperors of the East in the continual necessity of guarding their territory from invasion and civil uprisings. The armies in the West had gradually been reduced in size and

strength until but a shadow of their former power remained. The Popes had often noticed this apparent centralization of all power on the shores of the Bosporus, but were powerless to change the policy of the empire. The people, on the other hand, came to look upon the Popes of Rome as their natural and lawful protectors, while the people of the East, though proud to have the central government in their midst, bore no friendly feelings towards the court of Constantinople. In Europe new nations that knew not nor loved the Greeks were by degrees growing into mighty powers. To them the Pope represented all that was high and authoritative in Church and in State. When St. Leo saved Rome from Attila he accomplished more than the armies of the East could have dared do, even for the East itself. This, and facts of a similar nature, was not lost on the sturdy Saxons, Franks, or Normans. When therefore they received the news of Leo's high-handed actions in matters of religion they severed once and for all whatever weak ties of allegiance may still have remained intact. This was really the prime factor in the complete separation of East and West, and in the foundation of the papal power, a power which was crystallized, under successive grants and donations, into the temporal sovereignty of the Church. From now on the well-known *Ducatus Romanus* became the nucleus of a new régime. The Pope appointed the Chief, or *Dux,* of this suzerainty, and to signalize his authority, Gregory II refused to send the customary taxes to Constantinople, and Leo's threats came to naught. The emperor then tried to cause the assassination of the Pope. He also sent Paul, Exarch of Ravenna, with an armed force to take Rome. But the Romans, assisted by the Lombards,

forced him to retire.[24] The Italians decided to elect a new emperor, and crown him at Constantinople, but were dissuaded by the Pope.

Gregory II died on February 10, 731.[25] His successor, who took the name of Gregory III, was chosen before the obsequies of his predecessor were completed. He ascended the pontifical throne shortly afterwards. Gregory III was a Syrian, and understood the Iconoclastic heresy thoroughly. He took up the struggle where the elder Gregory had left it, and continued with the same firmness and vigor to combat the lofty pretensions of the Isaurian. The younger Gregory, as the people affectionately called him, sent a legate[26] to Leo to remonstrate with the haughty emperor, but to no purpose. The Pope then assembled a council in St. Peter's, in Rome. There were ninety-three bishops present (732). In this council, which was not ecumenical, it was decreed that anyone who should destroy, mutilate, or dishonor sacred images, which were handed down by tradition to the Apostolic Church, should be cut off from all unity with the Church.[27]

The council wrote to Leo, and another legate was dispatched with letters in which the emperor was warned that if he continued his impious deeds his

[24] All the details of this persecution by the Iconoclasts may easily be found in the larger works of Church History, Darras, Rohrbacher, Henrion, etc., as well as in Baronius, Natalis Alexander, etc.

[25] He is honored as a Saint by the Church, on Feb. 13.

[26] This was the priest, George, who on his first visit was afraid to approach the emperor. The second time he was sent, Leo ordered him apprehended in Sicily. His letters were destroyed, and he himself was cast into prison.

[27] Labbè, *Sacr. Conc.* vi, 1463. As a result of this council and a protest against the Iconoclasts, many magnificent statues and paintings were erected in St. Peter's. Cf. Henrion, *Hist. Univer.*, l. 23.

Western provinces would be lost to the empire. But Leo had gone too deeply into the heresy to be moved by any argument. He answered by sending a large fleet to reduce Italy to subjection. This fleet came to grief, and was scattered and almost destroyed in the Adriatic. With a refined touch of malice the wily emperor now refrained from putting to death those who opposed him, for fear the Christians might honor them as martyrs. So he contented himself with torturing them. The affairs of the empire were now in a bad shape. The West vacillated, the Mohammedans took advantage of the confusion and renewed their attacks, while terrible calamities visited every part of the realm. After seeing his policies thwarted, and his dominions a prey to suffering and devastation, Leo ended his career in 741, the same year in which Gregory III died.

The new emperor, Constantine Copronymus, was a worthy successor to his fanatical sire. He is described as a monster of cruelty and lust. He infused new life into the Iconoclasts. He is said to have denied the divinity of Christ.[28] While he was in Syria fighting the Moslems his brother-in-law Artabasus proclaimed himself emperor, declaring Constantine had perished. The people were overjoyed and easily believed the report. Artabasus was crowned, and restored the worship of images with the assistance of the pliable Anastasius, the condemned pseudo-patriarch. Suddenly Constantine reappeared with a large army. He ordered Artabasus and Anastasius to have their eyes put out, and the wretched Anastasius after many humiliating tortures again returned to Iconoclasm. Images were again destroyed. Copronymus convoked a

[28] Henrion, l. c.

pseudo-council in 754. Three hundred and forty bishops [29] with false views on images attended and carried out the emperor's wishes in everything. The four great patriarchal sees,[30] however, refused to take part in this uncanonical assemblage. Sacred images of every kind were condemned, and the faithful who believed in them were branded as idolaters. The council paid its respects to St. Germanus, St. John Damascene, and George of Cyprus, by pronouncing a curse against these holy defenders of the faith. The council piously explains that the "Holy Trinity had destroyed these three." [31]

After this mock council the persecution raged with renewed vigor. Images everywhere were broken and destroyed. The walls of the churches were decorated with paintings of flowers, birds, and animals. Defenders of the icons were brutally put to death. The emperor endeavored to extirpate monasticism, root and branch, as the source of evil, since the monks were staunch upholders of the images. The new heretical patriarch, Constantine, crossed his royal master in some matter, and was beheaded. Nicetas succeeded to the see and was another tool of state. The persecution went on fiercely until 775, when Copronymus was gathered to his fathers. His son and successor, Leo IV, proved a sort of "good tyrant," and matters were being quietly readjusted, when the emperor discovered that the pious empress Irene and many of his household secretly worshipped the hated icons. He immediately decreed a general persecution, but died before effecting his intent.

[29] Mansi says 338 — t. xiii, 575.
[30] Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem.
[31] The acts of this pseudo-synod are found in Labbè, *Conc.* t. vii, 396 seq.

In the meantime local councils had been held in favor of holy images. Thus Pepin, with permission of the Pope, called a synod at Paris in 767.[32] We have not the decrees of this council, but it is generally believed from later developments that they maintained the worship of images. The Pope's delegates were present at this gathering.

Again. A synod was held in Jerusalem about this time,[33] at which the Patriarchs of Alexandria and of Antioch assisted Theodore, Patriarch of Jerusalem. Image-worship was strongly defended. Finally in 769 a council was called at Rome by Pope Stephen III, in which Iconoclasm was dealt a fatal blow.

All these events paved the way for the ecumenical council which soon followed. This was facilitated by the fact that Irene, who was acting as regent for the young Constantine, and Tarasius, the new Patriarch of Constantinople, begged Pope Adrian I to convoke a large council and to settle once and for all time the mooted question of sacred images.

The history of this synod, the Seventh General Council of the Church, together with the preliminary preparations, is a matter of general knowledge. We shall therefore consider but one or two points that bear directly upon the question which we propose to examine, namely, whether this council really condemned or approved the worship of sacred images; for the Council of Frankfort afterwards refused to recognize the Catholicity of this Nicene Synod.

The Seventh Council was held in Nicæa, in Bithynia, in 787.[34] It was attended by the legates of the

[32] Mansi says it was held on Christmas day, 766. Xii, 677.

[33] Mansi, l. c. 679.

[34] It was opened in 786, in Constantinople, but the Iconoclast soldiers refused to allow it to proceed. Irene, by a clever ruse,

Pope, Adrian I, and by three hundred and fifty bishops. Tarasius presided. Seven sessions, with an eighth sitting at Constantinople, were held.

In this council the doctrine of sacred images was clearly established. In the first session the Fathers received the confession of faith of those bishops who had unfortunately been ensnared in the meshes of Iconoclasm. They likewise listened to the letters of the Pope and accepted them entirely. In the following meetings the question of images was taken up and examined thoroughly. Scripture was appealed to [35] on this subject, and the volume of tradition and the teachings of the Fathers approving the use and the worship of sacred images were critically discussed, and found to be universally in favor of the doctrine. The origin of Iconoclasm was gone into,[36] heretics refuted and condemned, and to confirm and manifest their belief the members of the council had an icon set up in their midst. Then the pseudo-synod of 754 was rejected as uncanonical, since the Pope was not represented, as were neither the other three patriarchs.

Among the various papers read in this council was one by Leontius, Bishop of Neapolis, in Cyprus. In a dialogue with a Jew this prelate examines the question of image-worship from every point of view. The gist of his argument is that worship paid to the image is given in reality to God, and that the image but serves to awaken our affection and veneration for the person therein represented. "We do not," he says, "adore as gods the images of saints. If we rendered divine worship to a wooden image, why should we destroy

recalled the troops from foreign parts, disarmed the Iconoclast soldiery, and sent them to their homes.

[35] IV *Sess.*

[36] V *Sess.*

the material of the image once the representation has been effaced?[37] For if we worshipped the material itself, why we surely would also worship trees, and groves, just as thou, O Israel, didst once adore these things, saying to a tree, 'thou art my god: thou hast begotten me.'"[38] He argues directly: "By what token are we idolaters, if we honor the ashes, the bones, the vesture, the blood, and the shrines of the martyrs, precisely because they refused to worship idols?"[39]

These few words express the tenor of the sentiments entertained by the Fathers of the council in regard to true image-worship. In this sense do they explain their stand against the Iconoclasts, who would destroy a time-honored practice and offer nothing in its place.[40]

Throughout the proceedings of this council there is absolutely nothing that could be alleged in detriment to the apostolic tradition which the Fathers cite in support of their claims. True, they appear to have accepted as genuine several so-called *acherophites,* as the picture at Edessa; but we must remember that historical criticism had not as yet progressed so far as to demonstrate the lack of authenticity of these images. Moreover, they by no means base their doctrine on this or that picture, nor on any group of pictures, but on the broad principle that, "he who honors a martyr, honors God, and he who worships His Mother, renders

[37] Marsi, xiii, c. 43.
[38] *Col.* 51.
[39] *Col.* 47.
[40] Dr. Schaff remarks complacently (*Hist. of Ch. Church,* iv, p. 452): "The chief defect of Iconoclasm . . . was its negative character. It furnished no substitute for image-worship. . . . It was very different from the Iconoclasm of the evangelical Reformation, which put in the place of images the richer intellectual and spiritual instruction from the Word of God." Indeed!

worship to God. And would that thou, O Jew," adds Leontius, "wouldst make images of Moses and the prophets, and in these images adore the Lord God of Moses, rather than the golden image of Nabuchodonosor."[41] It is in this sense that they set forth their position as opposed to that of the image-breakers. Whence it appears incorrect to say that the distinction between the image itself, as a material, tangible object, and the person therein depicted, is a latter-day invention of subtle scholastics, as is clear from this council and from the patristic authorities quoted in the preceding chapter.

Here again the word adore comes in for a distinct significance. For Tarasius in his letter to Constantine and Irene, written in the name of the council, says: "With the grace and strength imparted to us by the Holy Ghost we have unanimously decided that the images of our Lord Jesus Christ made Man, are by all means to be received; likewise those of our Immaculate Lady, the Mother of God, as well as those of the holy angels and the saints. We have moreover decreed that the triumphant sufferings of the latter be depicted in images and on walls, as well as on the sacred vessels and vestments, in the sense in which God's Holy Catholic Church has received them from early times. These images are to be adored, that is, venerated.[42] . . . For there is an adoration which is offered by way of honor, of fear, and of love. . . . Thus therefore it is plain that it is pleasing to God to adore and to kiss the images of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed and ever pure Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, as also those of the angels and the saints. . . . Our holy and ecumenical synod anathematizes him who

[41] Mansi, l. c. 54.

[42] Labbè, *Conc.* vii, 582.

does not hold this same view, or who doubts, or heeds not this veneration of the sacred icons." [43]

The Synod finally drew up a profession of faith in regard to holy images. "They who dare to hold or to teach otherwise, or who despise ecclesiastical traditions, and invent any innovation, or cast aside anything belonging to the Church, whether Gospel, images, or relics of a martyr — if such persons be bishops or clerics, let them be deposed; if laymen or monks, let them be deprived of ecclesiastical communion." [44] Then they exclaimed, among other things: "We anathematize those who accuse Christians of innovation. We receive the holy images. Anathema to those who use against holy icons the words of Scripture directed against idols. Anathema to those who call holy images, idols. Anathema to those who do not venerate holy images. Anathema to those who claim that Christians approach images as gods. Anathema to those who assert that the Catholic Church ever received idols." [45]

Thus was the momentous question of sacred images and their worship settled for all time. The Church has ever acted upon the decisions of this council in regard to holy icons. Letters were sent to Pope Adrian, acquainting him with the actions of the

[43] 583.

[44] Col. 558.— In the first session we find in the act of faith: "Relying on the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin, the Mother of God, of the holy celestial powers, and of all the saints: accepting and embracing also the holy relics with all honor, I reverently worship them, believing firmly that I thereby become partaker in their sanctity. I likewise accept and reverence the venerable images of Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, who for our salvation became Man, as also those of our Immaculate Lady, the Mother of God, and those of the holy Apostles, prophets, martyrs, and of all saints; (*promising*) to show them all due honor." Mansi, xiii, 506.

[45] 575.

Synod.[46] Within a few years, however, the question was again mooted in the West. It was rather a misunderstanding on the part of the Western Bishops than a rejection of the true doctrine.

Briefly, it arose in this way. In the year 794 Charlemagne, with the consent of the Sovereign Pontiff, convened a council at Frankfort to condemn the errors of Felix and Elipandus, who were endeavoring to resurrect the old Nestorian heresy of two Persons in Christ. In the course of the council proceedings the question of the late Synod of 787 came up. In the second canon the Fathers thus speak: "The question was proposed in the council concerning the late synod held by the Greeks at Constantinople in regard to the adoration of images. In this council it was stated that any person who refused to render to the images of the saints the same adoration as to the most Holy Trinity, should be condemned. Our holy Fathers positively refused such adoration and worship, and strongly reprobated it."[47]

For a long time this canon caused considerable contention, and was revived by some of the reformers. The chief reason for the mistake was the fact that a faulty Latin translation of the Acts of the Seventh Synod had been sent by Adrian I to Charlemagne.[48] The Fathers of Frankfort with their calmer Western temperament failed to grasp the fervid emotionalism of the Greeks. Then they had a hazy idea that the Greeks had been guided in their council by a woman,

[46] 623–38.

[47] Mansi, xiii, 909.

[48] Anastasius Bibliothecarius says that the first translator rendered the Greek word for word, so that it frequently was difficult to determine his meaning. Anastasius himself later made a better translation. Apud Nat. Alex. *saec.* viii, § 8.

the empress Irene. Besides, feeling against the Greeks in general was very pronounced in the West, since, as stated above, the nations of Europe felt they had been slighted by Byzantium, and left to their own resources in their various wars. Now, on top of all this came the distorted confession of faith of Constantine, Bishop of Constantia in Cyprus. In the first Latin translation this good man was made to say: "I receive the holy and venerable images with the same adoration which I give to the consubstantial and life-giving Trinity." [49] This it was that stirred the Fathers to their denunciation mentioned above in the second canon. Their very indignation at such a statement is one of the clearest proofs of their orthodoxy. What Constantine really said was: "I receive and embrace the holy and venerable images; and the adoration which is offered according to Latria, I render only to the consubstantial and life-giving Trinity." [50]

This evidently is perfectly orthodox. The controversy continued for some time, the opinion of the Frankfort bishops being stated in the famous Caroline Books.[51] Gradually, however, the Western Christians came to see matters in their true light, and in fact we find the churches of Europe at this period filled with mosaics, frescos, and paintings of various kinds. A few other feeble outbreaks of a local character are recorded in the Frankish kingdom, but they soon dwindled down, and utterly disappeared.

In the East, however, the Iconoclasts seem suddenly to have come back to life. In the year 814 we behold the beginning of a repetition of all the evils of the first

[49] *P. L.* xcviii, 1148; *Libri Carolini*, l. iii, c. 17.
[50] Labbè, vii, 188 (*Sess.* iii).
[51] These books, long a subject of dispute, are now accepted as authentic. See, among other authorities, *Cath. Encyclop.* s. v.

period of image-breaking. The emperor Leo V, the Armenian, was the corypheus this time. The work of conciliation recently effected by the Seventh Council was all undone. Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, strove to the utmost to stem the torrent. St. Theodore, Abbot of the Studium [52] (died 826), was a second Damascene. But all to no purpose. The Iconoclasts did their work thoroughly. The faithful Catholics were hounded everywhere. This lasted until the empress Theodora, mother of Michael III, and then acting regent, finally restored the prestige of the Seventh Synod (842). Image-worship once more triumphed,[53] and the icons, after so many vicissitudes, were restored to their rightful place, which they still retain in the Orient among Uniats and Orthodox.

At a later period a synod was held at Constantinople under the Patriarch Nicholas (he ruled 1084–1111). It seems that Leo, Metropolitan of Chalcedon, had sent a rescript to Nicholas of Adrianople containing statements against holy images. Thereupon the emperor, Alexis Comnenus, called together a large assembly of prelates, doctors, and other learned men. Leo of Chalcedon also was summoned. The doctrine of the Fathers was defended, and several passages were read from the Seventh Council, which goes to show that the

[52] He laments that "the hymns handed down to us by our fathers, and which make mention of images, have been withdrawn, and in their place are substituted impious dogmas." L. ii, ep. 15.

[53] On the first Sunday of Lent (second Sunday for us) the Patriarch, empress, and many people spent the night in prayer in the Church of St. Maria in Blanchernis. The following morning they went in procession to St. Sophia, where Mass was celebrated, and the images solemnly restored. The Greeks still celebrate the "Feast of Orthodoxy," in commemoration of this great event. It is solemnized on the first Sunday of Lent. See the Κυριαμὴ τῆς Ὀρθοδοξίας, in the Τριώδιον — Rome, 1879, pp. 223–46.

true doctrine was still preserved among the Greeks. Among other things we find the following: "It is clear from this tradition (referring to the synodical decree of the VII Council just read) that we worship the saints as servants of Christ, by reason of Christ and of their service towards Him: but we adore Christ as Lord and God on account of Himself, and not by reason of any other. Hence we worship the images of the saints relatively, on account of the saints themselves; and we venerate the saints for their service towards their Lord and ours. But the adoration which belongs to Christ is Latria. For he who adores Christ adores also the Father and the Holy Ghost." [54]

It may be well here to remark that although both East and West agree perfectly on the doctrine of image-worship, there is a material distinction in regard to statues. The Orientals seem never to have taken favorably to solid statues, considering them too much like idols in appearance. Some statues, indeed, there were, as we have observed elsewhere, but the national feeling eventually crystallized into the custom of avoiding solid statues, and adhering to the use of flat icons.[55]

The piety of the West was not slow in devising means to honor the images of Christ and His saints. As is evident from the old churches of Europe that still exist, these venerable representations were held in the highest esteem. The walls of the sacred edifices were used to present to the eyes of the faithful scenes

[54] Mansi, xx, 1113.

[55] The iconostasis, or great screen, which runs from one side of the apse to the other, and sometimes covers the entire end of the church, is invariably ornamented with at least two icons, viz. of Christ and His Mother. Very often it is gorgeously decorated with many pictures.

taken from the lives of the martyrs and the great servants of God. Bede tells us that when St. Augustine and his companions entered England, they "carried as banners a silver cross and a painted image of the Savior." [56]

The opinion of St. Gregory the Great, which we have quoted elsewhere, confirms the Christian idea as prevalent in his time. Later on a church was erected at one side of the Roman Forum. This church, styled Sancta Maria Antiqua, was discovered in 1900, and is a magnificent example of the use of images at that period. The walls were completely covered with paintings of Christ, the saints, and various biblical scenes.[57]

As Christian art developed in the West we see the churches everywhere decorated with sacred representations down to the era of the great painters who all took their inspiration from Christianity. Everything that art could afford was dedicated to the service of the Church. We might mention among other things the magnificent mosaic works which the Christians copied from the pagans and adapted for pious subjects. Thus many of the old churches are veritable museums of this precious mosaic work. The artistic triumphs of such men as Buonarroti, Raphael, Perugino, Fra Angelico and the other great masters, were all achieved in the delineation of religious subjects. Nor were these pictures simple ornamental works. They aroused the devotion of the people to a high pitch. Scarcely a church in Southern Europe but had its favorite shrine whither the faithful flocked in devout pilgrimage to honor their

[56] *Hist. Anglor.* l. i, c. 25. *P. L.* xcv, 55.

[57] Marucchi, *Le Forum Romain*, p. 230. These pictures date from the VIII century.— The present writer witnessed this discovery in December, 1900.

patrons depicted in statue or fresco. Thus the great shrines soon became centers of devotion. Prayers to the saints were offered up before these holy icons, flowers adorned their altars, costly offerings were laid at their feet, vows were registered in their presence, and many a shrine bore mute testimony in the form of discarded crutches, arms, weapons, and jewels, to the efficacy of impetration on the part of the saint. The piety of the image-worshippers of the East found fit complement in the devotion of their brethren in the West, and the spirit which animated them was but an echo of the faith of the first centuries — a faith which sought help and protection in the prayers of the martyrs, in the veneration of their relics, and a pious confidence in any kind of worship which betokened respect for those departed heroes.

The iconoclasm of the eighth century found new champions in the agitators of the sixteenth. They denied the intercession of the Saints, and by a natural consequence, reprobated any kind of veneration shown to holy images. In places where the new belief gained power the paintings on the walls of churches were either destroyed or whitewashed over to remove from the pious view of the new sectaries the abominations of Roman idolatry. In their places were substituted decorations of flowers, birds, and other esthetic representations, restful to the eye and harmless to faith. In this way many excellent works of art were either destroyed or lost to view.

In the famous second Helvetic Conference of Faith drawn up in 1562, we read: "We reject not only pagan idols, but also Christian images. For though Christ took upon Himself human nature, He did not do this for the purpose of furnishing a model to sculp-

tors and painters. . . . He instituted sacraments, but nowhere did He erect statues. . . . Hence, we approve the opinion of Lactantius: 'There is no doubt, that where there is an image (*simulacrum*) there can be no religion.'" [58] This was the opinion received, or at least highly approved, by nearly all the Reformed Churches on the continent and in England and Scotland, as Schaff tells us.[59] The idea of Christ sitting as a model for painters and sculptors strikes us as rather puerile when alleged as a reason for avoiding images. Yet this was the spirit of the Reformers.

The Heidelberg Catechism, published in 1563, tells us that the First Commandment (or in the Protestant version, the Second) forbids the making of images. Referring to images of creatures, it says we are forbidden to make them, for, "though they may indeed be imaged yet God forbids the making or keeping any likeness of them, either to worship them, or by them to serve Himself." [60] Nay more, it is forbidden to have "pictures in churches as books for the laity," [61] referring to St. Gregory's opinion.

So also the Westminster Shorter Catechism, edited in 1647: "The second commandment forbiddeth the worship of God by images (*per simulacra*), or in any other way not appointed in His Word." [62]

The attitude of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England is well-known. "The Romish doctrine concerning . . . worshipping and adoration,

[58] *Confessio et Expositio Simplex*, ch. iv. Schaff, *Creeds*, t. iii, p. 242—4 ed.
[59] Ibid. note, p. 233.
[60] Schaff op. c. p. 343.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Q. li; l. c. p. 687.

as well of images as of relics . . . is a fond thing, vainly invented and founded on no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God." [63] As to whether this doctrine is repugnant to the Word of God appears from the reasons which we have adduced in the preceding chapter.

It seems strange that a practice which has the sanction of the early Church, which is founded on the doctrine of Christ's vital life in the Church; which has received the support and encouragement of councils, Fathers and Sovereign Pontiffs, as well as of the intelligent piety of the faithful should be contrary to the Word of God. Even the Eastern heretics who separated from us centuries ago retained the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. Holy images are held in as high veneration among the Orthodox Greeks and Russians to-day as among the most "Romish" adherents of Rome.

We read in the "Confession of Dositheus," drawn up by the Greek Orthodox Synod of Jerusalem in 1672, and directed against Calvinism, that the saints are to be venerated in their images. This Synod of the Greek Church corresponds in a sense to the Council of Trent in the Latin Church, as it placed the doctrines of the Orthodox Greeks on a firm basis, and at the same time condemned many innovations brought in by Protestantism. Now, these Greeks solemnly affirm: "We venerate, worship, and receive the images of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of His Most Holy Mother, and of all the saints, as well as of the Angels." [64] The bishops in this synod pay their respects to the new sectaries by adding: "If any man says that the veneration which

[63] *Art.* xxii.
[64] Q. iv.— Schaff, op. c. ii, 435.

we give to the saints and to their images is idolatry, we look upon such a view as stupid and vain." [65].

The same doctrine is set forth in the Græco-Russian Catechism which was published in 1839, and accepted as the standard of their doctrinal position. In answer to the question: "Is the use of holy icons agreeable to the second commandment?" we are told: "It would then, and then only, be otherwise, if any one were to make gods of them: but it is not in the least contrary to this commandment to honor icons as sacred representations, and to use them for the religious remembrance of God's works and of His saints; for when thus used icons are books, written with the forms of persons and things instead of letters." [66]

We quote these passages merely to show how far the Protestant doctrine of justification by Faith alone has carried its adherents. For if faith in Christ is sufficient for salvation, all other means are superfluous: hence, saints, their intercession, their relics, images, and their commemoration, are all useless impedimenta on the royal road to happiness eternal.

It appears to us that among the many inconsistencies into which Protestantism unhappily fell, none other is quite so pitiable as that which took away from it a powerful means of grace — a means used continually by St. Paul, and the other writers of the New Testament, namely, the Communion of Saints. If images are a source of piety, if they prove an incentive to holy thoughts and aspirations, if they raise our minds to things of heaven, without reference to the mere image itself, it must indeed be a strange logic which can ex-

[65] L. c.

[66] *The Longer Catechism of the Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Church;* on the Second Commandment (Schaff, *Creeds,* ii, 527; ed. 1896).

ercise its acumen in subtleties about grace, merit, and predestination, and still fail to grasp the obvious significance of the place images hold in Christian worship. In the words of the second Helvetic Confession we are told that Protestants "love (*the saints*) as brethren, and honor them, not with a ceremonial cult, but by cherishing honorable feelings towards them."[67]

They also imitate those friends of God: and yet they fear to recall the lives and deeds of those same friends by a mere pictorial representation. They tell us that such actions are idolatrous, as they lead to a repetition of the pagan practice of adoring idols. On the contrary, they say, we should look abroad on the works of Nature: they are the reminders of the great power of God. No fear of idolatry there. But we would respectfully remind them lest they fall into the other pagan extreme of adoring the powers of the air, the sea, the woods, and the skies, as the ancient peoples of both civilized and uncivilized periods were wont to do. Since our intention in the matter of image-worship does not, according to the reformers, save us from the charge of idolatry, it is not quite clear just how a similar intention on their own part will ward off the like charge of nature-worship when they tell us to view the power of God as exhibited in physical phenomena. We do both, and we refer all power and glory to God. When we look upon a mighty manifestation like the falls of Niagara, we involuntarily raise our thoughts to Him who is Author of all; and when we gaze upon a statue or image of the Mother of God or of one of His great servants, we feel our hearts enkindled with admiration for the original as well as

[67] *II Helvet. Conf.*, ch. v.

love for God, the source of this Saint's heroic pre-eminence.

As we said before, the reason why Protestants are forced to denounce image-worship is not their hatred of the saints, but rather through the stringent necessity under which they lie, according to their principles, of referring everything directly to Christ, and their novel understanding of the mediatorship of the Redeemer — a view that finds no strong and convincing support in antiquity, or in the Fathers of the Church, in spite of their apparent regard for those same Fathers. Viewing patristic tradition as a whole and in the light of archæology, and the constant teaching of the Church, we must conclude that the only arguments which can be adduced to strengthen the claim of the reformers in the matter of image-worship must of necessity be traced to the later Jews, the Mohammedans, and to heretics like the Manicheans and the Iconoclasts.

Finally, nothing can better illustrate the attitude of the Catholic Church on this point than the words she uses in her liturgy. In the liturgical prayer which she employs in blessing an image everything is referred to Almighty God. "Almighty, Eternal God, who forbiddest not the making of statues and images of thy Saints, in order that as often as we gaze upon them with material eyes, we recall to mind for our imitation their actions and holiness; we beseech Thee, that Thou deign to bless and to sanctify this image in honor and in memory of thy only-begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ (or thy Holy Mother, this holy martyr, etc.); and grant, that whosoever in presence of this image shall endeavor humbly to venerate and to honor thy only-begotten Son (*or* thy Blessed Mother, thy holy

martyr, etc.), shall, through their merits and power, obtain from Thee grace in the present life, and eternal glory in the life to come. Through Christ our Lord." [68]

Here the very essence of image-worship is shown to consist in recalling to mind, with a view to imitation, the deeds and sanctity of the original of those images. Just where the idolatry can be detected in this action it would surely be interesting to discover.

The Council of Trent, reviewing the subject under the light of reason, doctrine, and antiquity, thus puts to rest all objections that might arise as to the Church's position in regard to images. "Images of Christ, of the Mother of God, and of the Saints, are to be retained, especially in churches, and all due honor and reverence are to be shown them. Not that we believe the divinity to dwell therein, nor any other power that might claim our veneration: nor is anything to be asked of them; nor is any confidence to be placed in them, as the pagans were wont to do, resting their hopes in idols. But the honor which we exhibit reverts to the original represented by the image; so that in kissing an image, in uncovering or bowing before it, we adore Christ, and we venerate the saints therein depicted." [69]

This decree epitomizes the whole Catholic doctrine on this matter. It brings in no innovation, proposes no new interpretation, but it presents the pure, unsul-

[68] *Rituale Rom. Benedictio Imag.*

[69] *Conc. Trident.*, sess. xxv, *De Invocat.* In the profession of faith prescribed by Popes Urban VIII and Benedict XIV for the Greeks, we find: "I profess, as was defined against the Iconoclasts, that the images of Christ, and His Blessed Mother, as well as those of the saints, are to be retained, and that due homage and veneration be accorded them." Bucceroni, *Enchiridion Morale*, p. 63 (iii ed).

lied truth ever held and taught by the one true Church from the very beginning down in an unbroken tradition to the present day. The doctrine has been assailed, as has been every other teaching of the Church, but no subtlety, no violence, no ridicule has ever succeeded in causing the Church to modify one jot or tittle of her primitive belief in this or in any other dogma.

CHAPTER IV

THE CANONIZATION OF SAINTS

Here is the Might,
And here the Wisdom which did open lay
The path, that had been yearned for so long,
Betwixt the heaven and earth.

— *Dante.*[1]

The Communion of Saints in the Catholic Church is not a mere theory, nor a bit of pious imagery. It is a substantial fact, a part of her life, a tenet of her creed. She aims at saving men from perdition. They who not only succeed in this enterprise, but distinguish themselves far above their fellows, are selected by the Church and held up to the gaze of humanity as living proofs of her vitality and of the power of grace over nature. This act of placing a man or a woman in the catalogue of the Church's most glorious representatives, is called Canonization.

This term, like many other parts of Christian phraseology, has been the subject of gradual and logical development.[2] We shall endeavor to here present a clear but concise explanation of the rite and of its history. One of the basic principles to be accepted is that the Catholic Church alone has the right to

[1] *Div. Com. Paradiso,* c. xxiii.

[2] The standard Catholic work on this subject is by Benedict XIV (Lambertini): *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et de Beatorum Canonizatione.*

canonize a person.[3] This is clear from the preceding chapters.

In the early Church, owing to the continued and violent opposition against Christianity, heroism as exemplified in martyrdom was very common. The martyr not only accepted the teaching of religion: he sealed that doctrine in his blood. The Church in her turn placed a seal upon her faithful child. If found to have been a genuine martyr, his name was entered upon the diptychs of the local church, and his fame thenceforth was assured. Sometimes an altar was erected over or near his tomb, Mass was there celebrated, his glory proclaimed, his relics honored: he was canonized.

It must not be thought, however, that all this took place without careful and deliberate investigation. Although in the primitive ages of Christianity the local bishop claimed and exercised the right of proceeding in this matter, he used every precaution to exclude not only the unworthy, but even those whose sanctity was open to doubt. Many examples might be adduced in proof of this severe scrutiny. Witness the care exercised by Cæcilianus mentioned elsewhere. St. Augustine relates a similar action on the part of Mensurius, Bishop of Carthage. Certain Christians had imprudently drawn down upon themselves the fury of the pagans, and were put to death. Mensurius was highly displeased at this lack of judgment, and forbade the people to honor them as martyrs.[4] These two typ-

[3] In 1903 the Holy Russian Synod, with the permission of the Czar, canonized Father Seraphim († 1833) of Saroff monastery — *London Cath. Times*, Mar. 6, 1903.— Cf. *Encyclop. of Religion, Ethics*, s. v. *Canonization*.

[4] St. Aug. *Brevic. Collat.*, col. iii, 13. The fifth council of Carthage warned the bishops to exert great watchfulness about the *memoriæ* of the martyrs (*Can.* 14). The emperor Phocas is said to have wished to enroll as martyrs those who had died

ical facts illustrate the extreme caution used in determining to whom the honor of martyrdom was due. They also point to the juridical position assumed by the Church in rejecting false or doubtful claims. This judicial power, as stated, was the prerogative of every bishop in his own diocese, even with regard to other local martyrs relatively to their worship in his diocese. His power however was circumscribed to the extent that he could not act thus fully with regard to martyrs and their cult in other than his own jurisdiction. To approve the worship of a saint for the whole Church or any considerable portion belonged to him who presided over the whole body — the Bishop of Rome. This despite the fact that councils sometimes fixed the worship of a saint for a province or nation.

After the formality of approbation had been confirmed by the bishop the martyr was styled *vindicatus* — approved. The faithful were then permitted to manifest towards him all those marks of respect and veneration due his dignity, and to invoke his intercession.

It is unhistorical to hold that Christian canonization was but a rite borrowed from the pagans. It becomes monotonous to be obliged continually to refer to and refute the old charge that Christian practices are but pagan usages refurbished. External similarity does not always indicate identity of nature or of origin. If examined closely there is nothing essentially in common between canonization and the pagan apotheosis. In canonizing a person the Church declares that he practiced heroic virtue with or without the shedding of

in battle. The bishops opposed this, as contrary to patristic tradition. Fleury, *H. E. l.* xxxvii, 3. Many councils, as that in London under St. Anselm (1102), forbade any veneration of the dead without permission of the bishop. Mansi, xx, 1152.

blood (infallibility does not seem to attach principally to this part). She recognizes the heights of sanctity which he may have attained, and in virtue of his title she proposes him to her other children as a patron and a protector, to be honored as a mortal of consummate goodness, to be invoked as a powerful friend of God. All this is done after the most mature deliberation. On the other hand, among the pagans, apotheosis, by a decree of the senate,[5] transformed a man into a god. Not only was he to be invoked, but adored as well. To drive this truth home, temples were erected in his honor, sacrifice offered to him, and divine worship in other ways paid to his memory: he was deified. No account was taken of his previous life. His vices and virtues were matters of indifference. Even during his lifetime he might be thus honored, as were not a few Romans. Nay, apotheosis was looked upon as the most convenient and the safest way of ridding the nation of an undesirable or too powerful individual.[6] He was quietly put to death, a handy minion or official declared he saw the victim's spirit soar aloft, the senate apotheosized him, the people worshipped his memory, and all was well. History relates many cases of such pagan deification. Without further comment it is clear that absolutely no essential likeness can be discovered between these two processes. As St. Augustine says: "Our martyrs are not gods; for both they and we recognize the same God." [7]

[5] Tertullian uses this fact against the pagans: "The dignity of godhead depended on a decree of the Senate. He whom the Senate denounced, evidently was not a god." *Apolog.* xiii.

[6] After Nero had kicked Poppæa to death, he had her apotheosized.

[7] *De Civ. Dei* xxii, 10.

As noted, the term used in the early Church was *martyr vindicatus*. The word Canonization came into use at a much later date. It signified that the person in question had been enrolled in the Canon, or catalogue of Saints. When the Pope now, after a long legal process, ascribes a person among the saints, he writes the name at the end of the Canon, and then invokes him during the Mass which is immediately offered to God in honor of the newly declared saint.

When the cessation of persecution caused a falling off in the number of martyrs the Church turned her attention to honor those who had led lives of sanctity without the shedding of blood. Then it was that the confessors began to appear with greater prominence. Among the first of those to be singled out for special veneration were the great ascetics of the time, who emulated in a bloodless manner the heroic fortitude of the martyrs.[8] St. Martin, St. Anthony, St. Hilarion, St. Ephrem, and others are proofs that even in the fourth century the confessors were objects of public veneration. The Church ever used the same diligence in ascertaining the basis of their claims as she did in the case of their martyred brethren. She accorded this honor to great apostles, as St. Patrick; to illustrious doctors, as St. Augustine; to models of the hermitical life; to holy women, as St. Genevieve.[9]

In the course of time for various reasons the Popes began to restrict the power of canonizing, until finally they retained it all as the prerogative of the Apostolic See. At times popular fervor did not discriminate sufficiently in the matter of venerating certain persons. Then, too, the bishops now and then proved

[8] Duchesne, *Ch. Worship*, p. 284.
[9] Macken, *Canonization*, p. 21.

careless in particular cases. Again, it was always necessary to refer to the permission of Rome when treating of a saint to be venerated universally. In this way, and as a result of this centralization of such power, a new distinction arose. In virtue of this distinction Canonization was marked out as different from Beatification.[10]

The points of variance between these two forms of veneration are briefly these: Beatification is simply permission granted by the Pope to venerate a person under certain fixed conditions. He may be thus honored in a particular diocese, or province, or nation, but not elsewhere. Or this permission may be restricted to a certain religious order. Again, this person may at times be venerated throughout the whole Church, but there is no obligation to do so. This was permitted by Sixtus IV in the case of Blessed John Boni. The office and Mass of such persons are not allowed without a special indult of the Pope.[11] On the other hand, Canonization places a saint before the entire Church as an object of veneration. It not only does this permissively, but it is preceptive, and entails an obligation. Under this later distinction it is obvious that the earlier canonizations in local churches would be but a beatification.

Another point of difference is that at present the Blessed is not entitled to the nimbus, or *aureola*. The nimbus is a halo of light depicted around the head of the person. Its origin is anterior to Christianity. The pagans used it for their emperors and other per-

[10] The title *Venerable* is applied to those in whose causes of beatification the Commission of Introduction has been signed by the Pope.— Macken, l. c. p. 4.

[11] Even then a votive mass is not allowed in their honor, nor has the office an octave.

sonages. Early Christian art adapted this as symbolic of sanctity, since "God is light." It did not then necessarily indicate a saint. In the fourth century it was used for Christ, and shortly afterwards for the Blessed Virgin and the saints. In form, we often find the square nimbus. Thus St. Gregory I allowed himself to be painted with the square nimbus. This was customary with living persons, even with women and children. The *aureola* was usually an oval halo which surrounded the whole figure. Gradually the nimbus was restricted to representations of the saints, and Urban VIII forbade giving it to those who were not beatified.[12] Now it is proper to represent a Blessed with rays proceeding from the head as center, while the halo is reserved for saints.

After the Popes began to reserve the power of Canonization the first person to receive that honor is generally held to be St. Ulric, Bishop of Augsburg, who was raised to this dignity by John XV in 993. Some writers have maintained that the first saint thus canonized was St. Swibert, who was honored by Pope Leo III, in 804, in Germany, and in the presence of Charlemagne and the cardinals. This opinion, however, is not accepted by all critics.[13]

Even after this period there are instances of canonization by episcopal authority. The last of these probably was that of St. Walter, canonized by the Archbishop of Rouen, in 1153.

In 1173, however, Alexander III reproved certain bishops for allowing honors to be paid to a man who

[12] Cf. Gietmann, *Cath. Encyclop.* s. v. *Nimbus.*

[13] For account of this opinion, see Moroni, *Dizionario, ecc* vii, 282.— St. Simeon of Treves was the next Saint canonized, by Benedict VIII, in 1042.

had been killed while intoxicated. He adds: "You shall not honor him in the future; for even if miracles were wrought through him, it is not permissible for you to venerate him without the authority of the Roman Church." In the decree, *Audivimus*, he declared such power was thereafter reserved to the Holy See.[14] This was confirmed by Innocent III, in 1200.[15] The first canonization after the decree of Alexander III was that of St. Bruno (†1125) by Lucius III (in 1182).[16] In 1587 Sixtus V instituted the Sacred Congregation of Rites.[17] One of the chief duties of this congregation is to examine into all causes of Beatification and Canonization. This systematizes the ancient method where the bishop acted chiefly on his own responsibility.

Although the Church was ever severe in this matter, abuses sometimes arose. Exercising his authority in a comprehensive manner, Urban VIII, in 1625 and in 1634, settled definitely the various questions in this regard. He decreed that without the permission of the Pope thereafter no religious veneration should be paid to any person recently deceased; this in spite of heroic virtue or even miracles. An exception was made. It was this. A person who had received public veneration through the tolerance or consent of the Church, or through the testimony of the Fathers, or who had been the recipient of such public cultus for a period "of which the memory of man ran not to the contrary"— (interpreted to mean one hundred

[14] *Decretal.* Boniface VIII, tit. xlv.
[15] Bull XXXI, *Cum Secundum.*
[16] Charlemagne had been canonized by the anti-pope, Paschal III, in 1165. The Church simply tolerated this as a beatification. —Benedict XIV, De Beatif. i, 4.
[17] Constit. *Immensa Aeterni Dei.*

years)[18]— such an one was allowed to retain his standing before the faithful with the permission of the Church. Hence those servants of God who died one hundred years before these decrees were issued and who were not beatified, but yet had received public veneration, were now to receive what was termed Equivalent (*equipollens*) beatification. This confirmation permitted the application for Canonization. The rules formulated by Urban VIII are practically followed to-day.

As regards the certainty attached to a decree of Canonization it is generally held by theologians that the Pope is infallible in this act. This infallibility seems to attach to the declaration that the person thus honored is a saint, and not to the historical value of the proofs of virtue.[19] This infallibility is not claimed for Beatification.

Formerly the beatification was published by placing a lighted lamp before the sepulcher of the person, his image above the church door, and by celebrating his Mass and office in some church of Rome. Alexander VII ordered that this ceremony should be held in St. Peter's in Rome. He himself thus celebrated the beatification of St. Francis of Sales (1662).

The process of Canonization is without doubt one of the most rigorous investigations possible. Two points are kept ever in view: did the person practice virtue in an heroic degree: did he work miracles. Of these conditions the former is by far the more im-

[18] Formerly Canonization sometimes took place soon after the person's death. St. Clare died on Aug. 12, 1253, and was canonized on Sept. 26, 1255. St. Peter of Castelnau was put to death on Jan. 15, 1208, and canonized Mar. 12, the same year. Now fifty years must elapse after death.

[19] Becchi, in *Cath. Encyclop.* s. v.

portant, since miracles are not necessarily a proof of extraordinary sanctity. They constitute a pure gift of God. They usually accompany but do not infallibly include holiness.

In investigating the cause of the person to be canonized the utmost precision and caution are used. Many meetings of the cardinals and of other learned men appointed as consultors are held, and everything connected with the spiritual life of the person is scrutinized minutely. His life, actions, words, habits, writings, and everything that might militate for or against his holiness are gone into with inexorable severity. It is required that he shall have wrought at least two miracles after the permission of a public veneration has been granted.[20] In the case where an equivalent beatification has taken place (no miracle is required for this) it is necessary to prove the existence of four miracles subsequent to this permission before Canonization can be allowed.

The discussion as to the authenticity of the miracles is searching and thorough. The three classes of miracles are brought into play, and the promoter of the Faith[21] leaves no point of the process free from attack in order to bring out the genuineness of the miracles. Arguments from history, science, spiritualism, are all utilized in order to prove whether the alleged facts are truly miraculous. Surely no civil process of examination could be more complete.[22] If the virtues

[20] If the evidence of virtues or martyrdom has been established by those who were not eye-witnesses, four miracles are required, for beatification, and two for canonization; if by eye-witnesses, then two miracles suffice for beatification and two for canonization.— Macken, op. c. 188.

[21] He is popularly known as the *Advocatus Diaboli*, the devil's advocate, from the opposition he brings to bear on the subject in hand.

[22] This severity is illustrated by an incident. An English gen-

have been proven to be heroic, and the miracles to be genuine, a final meeting is held and the Pope publishes the Bull of Canonization. He solemnly commands that veneration be now paid to the person in question as to a recognized saint of the Church. A Mass and office of the new saint are published, a day is fixed for the final solemnities, and the celebration takes place in St. Peter's Church.

All the circumstances surrounding the process of Canonization are of such a nature that they serve to give the believer a firmer trust in his religion, a wholesome respect for the wisdom of the Church, and a deeper love of Almighty God, who thus honors in a palpable manner the merits and virtues of His servants.

tleman called on a Roman prelate who was engaged on a cause of canonization. The prelate handed his visitor a list of miracles and their proofs submitted in the case. The latter, after reading them carefully, declared that if all miracles were proved as thoroughly, non-Catholics would have little trouble in accepting them. The prelate replied that the Congregation had rejected every one of these facts as not sufficiently proven.

CHAPTER V

PILGRIMAGES AND SHRINES

And his sepulchre shall be glorious.
— *Isaias xi, 10.*

In the golden chain of affection which binds the living to the departed, one of the strongest and most enduring links is that represented by the desire of proximity, of union. It is a platitude that possession of the beloved is one of the distinctively characteristic traits in the ardent longing and yearning of the lover. Love aims directly at union, at the pleasure or profit which accrues, or is thought to accrue, from the possession of the object loved. In a certain sense, love is selfish, even mercenary. It not only directs its affection towards its object, but at the same time claims a not insignificant amount of satisfaction and serene enjoyment in that object. It not only loves for the sake of the object loved, but it loves for its own sake, for the personal gratification of loving. This self-gratification is supreme when the object is actually possessed in the security of fruition.

Now what is true in a general significance is often likewise verified in the spiritual acceptance. The saints of God are dear to the Church and to the individual Christian. Membership in the *societas sanctorum* — the company of the blessed — has ever proven a worthy object of legitimate ambition in the ranks of the

Church Militant. The love that fused the latter, together with the Church Triumphant and Suffering, into one compact body of sanctity, tended to stimulate and fortify and encourage the wayfarer on earth in his struggles towards the ultimate acquisition of immortal happiness. The unmistakable confidence in future reunion expressed in the simple, *To Pauline, who slumbereth,* of the primitive Christian, breathed forth a spirit of love and longing that yearned beyond the temporary barrier of the tomb. So long as mortal existence kept the Christian a pilgrim from his heavenly country, he would become at least a pilgrim to the mortal remains of those whom he honored and revered. Next to the joy of entering into the company of the blessed was the consolation of visiting their temporary resting-places. The sense of sight, of actual presence, of contact with these beloved souvenirs of his faithful protectors, was sufficient to arouse in the Christian a new ardor and devotion towards the saints, a greater love for God, and an indomitable courage in triumphing over the trials of life.

The motive which urges a man to visit the tomb of a great hero or benefactor of humanity is more profound than any local or personal predilection It is co-extensive with the spirit of humanity itself. It finds its foundation in the deep sense of reverence for superior excellence and exalted achievements. Not a few of the beings of pagan mythology were actual persons. Their extraordinary services to the race endeared them more and more to succeeding generations. Finally the superstitious tendencies of a grateful posterity cast the halo of divinity about them, and they stood forth panoplied in all the splendor of supernatural powers. The veneration towards them then

became a religious feeling; but it still rested upon the universal recognition of superiority.

As explained in the chapters on Relics and on Martyrs, the Christians seized this perfectly natural tendency, purified it, and directed it towards a spiritual scope. Hence it is uncritical to hold that the Christian pilgrimages are simply a development of the old pagan beliefs. They represent, as observed, a deep tendency of the human soul, but specialized in a particular application to an object of religion.

This primitive Christian attitude early found an outlet towards the places consecrated by Our Lord as well as in the footsteps of the Apostles. The terrible calamities that befell the holy city subsequent to the death of Christ rendered it difficult of access to Jewish Christians. Then in 132 the pseudo-Messia, Bar Kochba, raised the standard of rebellion against both the Romans and the Jewish converts to the religion of Christ. After the suppression of this uprising by Hadrian (135), Jerusalem became but an insignificant Roman city, under the name of Aelia Capitolina.[1] Paganism was introduced, Mount Moria was desecrated with a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, and no Jew, Christian or orthodox, was allowed within the city.

It is evident that during the era of persecution it was difficult, not to say impossible, to organize pilgrimages on a large scale. The hatred of the pagans for the faithful rendered such a course almost suicidal. Hence, as a result of Roman occupation, we are not surprised to find the holy places gradually become neglected. Indeed, in 326, Constantine, at the solicitation of St. Helena, began to restore the place around

[1] *Ælia* was Hadrian's family name.

Calvary. He found the spot had been covered over by Hadrian with a grove dedicated to Venus and Jupiter,[2] and surrounded by a wall. In the center was a temple of the goddess.[3] The pious emperor had this all removed and erected two structures, one of them the famous Anastasis, which incloses the Holy Sepulcher.

Still, we know from history that individual pilgrims visited the holy city even during the early period. Thus we learn from Eusebius that Alexander, Bishop of Cappadocia, went to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage early in the third century, and was soon after appointed bishop of the city.[4] When peace was finally inaugurated in the Christian world, Jerusalem gradually rose to the position demanded by its possession of so many reminders of the life and death of Christ. The emperor and his saintly mother spared no means to place before the world in due prominence those sacred memorials. The natural result was that love of Christ and of all that pertained to Him led the faithful from all parts of the land consecrated by His former presence. A veritable wave of pilgrimage now set out for the holy places. In the fourth century vast throngs hurried to Palestine to venerate the precious relics there found.[5] St. Jerome himself not only visited these localities (386), but settled down at Bethlehem to a life of study, penance and prayer. Thither his example induced others to come, among them, the pious Roman matrons Paula and Eustochium. Not

[2] St. Jerome, *ep.* 58.
[3] Euseb. *Vita Constant.* iii, 26.
[4] Euseb. vi, 10. Eusebius drew a great deal of historical material from the library founded here by Alexander. The latter was also a friend fo Origen. Duchesne says that Alexander had been forced to go to Jerusalem.
[5] St. Jerome, *ep.* xliv *ad Paulam,* lxxxiv *ad Oceanum.*

only did this movement tend to keep alive popular devotion towards the sanctified footsteps of Christ, but at the same time it caused those holy places to be distinctly marked out, surrounded with the splendor of religion, and rescued from the oblivion which had at first threatened them. Moreover, the pilgrims assiduously followed the peculiar rites and ceremonies there enacted, and afterwards in their own lands endeavored to carry out as faithfully as possible the same rites in a commemorative way. Thus originated the Stations of the Cross, and many other pious exercises, now the common practice of Christendom.

There is a document still extant, the diary of a pious pilgrim of the fourth century, that throws considerable light on the condition of affairs in Palestine at that period.[6] This document was published by Professor Gamurrini, and is called the *Peregrinatio S. Silviae.* It is supposed to have been written by a lady named Etheria, and while she was on a pilgrimage to the holy places of Palestine. It shows us that at that epoch the services of the Church were carried on with great solemnity and according to a fixed liturgy. The writer describes minutely — without violating the *Lex Arcani* — the ceremonies, ritual, processions, fast, festivals, and many other matters of the highest importance for a clear understanding of the early rites of the Church. She also describes the Stations. In speaking of the one at Bethany, the second milestone from the city, she tells us that there was a church on the spot where Mary, the sister of Lazarus, met Our Lord.

Pilgrims continued to flock to the holy city up to

[6] Cf. Magani, i, 87; or Duchesne, *Christian Worship,* Appendix, 1904.

the time of the Moslem conquest (636), and even afterwards. Charlemagne, having received the keys of the Holy Sepulcher from Haroun al-Raschid, built a hospice near the spot for Latin pilgrims. From that time up to the Crusades the Christian pilgrims were subject to the political vicissitudes that followed upon Moslem ambition to rule the world.

We cannot doubt that the tombs of the Apostles were the goal for many pilgrims even in early times. We know that from the death of St. John his tomb at Ephesus was visited by all classes of Christians.[7] It held the same attraction for the East that the West felt towards the remains of St. Peter and St. Paul.[8] Polycrates, one of St. John's successors, in narrating to Pope Victor the fame of Ephesus, mentions most prominently the resting-place of the beloved disciple.[9]

In the West the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul were early the center of a special devotion. In the first part of the third century the priest Caius writing against contemporary heretics, points out with certainty the resting-place of the Prince of the Apostles. "I can show you the triumphal monuments (*trophaea*) of the Apostles. For whether you go to the Vatican or to the Ostian Way there stand forth before you the monuments of those who founded that (Roman) Church." [10] The word, *trophaea,* here seems to refer

[7] "Sur la fin du iv siècle, le saint prêtre Philorme vint à pied de Galacie ou de Cappadoce [to Alexandria] visiter le tombeau de ce glorieux athlete," i. e., of St. Mark. Tillemont *Mémoires,* ii, p. 44. In the beginning of the fifth century two pilgrims, Sts. Marania and Cyra, went from Berea in Syria, to Seleucia, to visit the remains of St. Thecla, the first virgin-martyr. They observed a strict fast both ways. L. c. 30.

[8] Cf. Fouard, *St. John,* 221.

[9] Euseb. *H. E.* v, 24.

[10] "Ego vero Apostolorum trophaea possum ostendere. Nam sive in Vaticanum, sive ad Ostiensem Viam pergere libet, occur-

to a sanctuary, or place of pilgrimage. This is hinted at in the Hieronymian Martyrology where we are told that St. Peter was buried in the Vatican, and is there praised by the whole world.[11]

As in other matters, so with regard to pilgrimages, the year 313 marked the beginning of a new era. When the Christian world awoke to the fact that the cross shone from the diadem of the Cæsars and that peace smiled on the erstwhile hunted Church, the first impulse was one of gratitude to God. The next was a turning towards the holy places where reposed the sacred remains of those who had given their lives in defence of the old faith. The Christian heart throbbed at the thought of an Agnes, a Callistus, a Lawrence, a Pancratius, a Clement, and the myriads of their companions who sanctified the earth throughout the vast extent of the Roman empire. Gratitude and admiration soon found an expression in those pious journeys undertaken to the tombs of the heroes. Every town and city had had its brave defenders of the faith. Ephesus in the East and Rome in the West, like two powerful beacons, attracted the faithful from every quarter. The local communities prided themselves on the possession of such holy remains. The graves of the local martyrs became a center of devotion for the surrounding district. Reverent piety forbade the removal of those precious heirlooms, and shrines and chapels and churches sprang up to perpetuate the remembrance of the heroes. The people gathered there on Sundays and other holy days to there perform

rent tibi trophaea eorum qui ecclesiam illam fundaverunt."—Caius quoted by Euseb. *H. E.* ii, 25.

[11] "Sepultus in Vaticano . . . totius orbis celebratione celebratur."

—*Fest. S. Petri.*

the sacred rites of their religion, as it were to testify to the martyrs that the faith which had sent those champions through the glorious maze of suffering still glowed with fervor in countless hearts of the living. As devotion increased, the martyrs repaid the fervor of their clients with stupendous miracles. The fame of these soon spread far and wide, with the result that pious persons from other towns and countries began to visit the most noteworthy of the shrines. Merchants and travelers reported in their own countries the splendors and wonders they had witnessed abroad. This served as a stimulus to their countrymen, and soon pilgrims, singly and in companies, began to visit the more famous of the shrines.

As was natural, Rome, the center of Christianity and the former storm-center of the persecutions, soon became the loadstone which attracted pilgrims from every quarter of the globe.[12] Priests, prelates, foreign emissaries and strangers of all classes, on visiting the Eternal City were impressed with the new glories which it had recently acquired in its countless martyrs. They there beheld the piety of the faithful in venerating the remains of the Apostles and the tombs of the martyrs, especially in the Catacombs. This all tended to draw vast throngs to the holy city. It became a fixed custom with the Romans themselves to visit those places regularly. St. Jerome tells us this

[12] St. Jerome (*ep.* xv *ad Laetam,* l. ii, ed. Rome, 1731) writes to a friend in the fourth century: "The splendid Capitoline is now a scene of desolation; all the temples of Rome are covered with dust and spider-webs: the city has undergone a transformation; and the crowds that formerly bowed before the now squalid shrines are hurrying to the tombs of the martyrs." Christianity, though hounded for three long centuries, emerged gloriously triumphant from the conflict: paganism, left to itself, died out in less than a century.

in one of his commentaries. "When I was a youth," he says, "and was pursuing my classical studies in Rome, I was wont, on Sundays, with other youths, to visit the tombs of the Apostles and the martyrs. Frequently we would descend into the crypts which are to be found on either hand on entering, and where repose the bodies placed along the walls (in the loculi)." [13]

Often, under the influence of strong sentiments of love, piety, and ardent devotion towards their patrons and protectors, the pilgrims left touching inscriptions — a prayer, an invocation, an ejaculation — all laden with the tenderest faith in the power of intercession of the martyr. These rude writings, scratched on walls, tombs, pictures, and called *graffiti,* are still quite visible. These pilgrims represented every clime, as well as every condition and walk of life. Numerous small habitations — *cellulae* — were erected over the catacombs, and there dwelt devoted and pious persons, who preferred to pass the remainder of their earthly career close to the relics of the martyrs.[14] As mentioned elsewhere, these localities became the coveted resting-places of countless believers. Such inscriptions as, *Retro Sanctos, Ad Sanctos,* and others quoted above, all refer to this. An inscription of the year 381 speaks of the rareness of obtaining the privilege:

[13] *Com. in Ezech.* c. xl. One of the most pious pilgrims of the fourth and fifth centuries was Aurelius Clemens Prudentius. He had held high positions in the imperial government of Spain, his native land, but later retired from the world. On a visit to Rome he prayed at many tombs of the martyrs, and left a valuable book of fourteen hymns on the glories of the martyrs: Περὶ Στεφάνων. In this and in his other works his style is elegant and polished, and his testimony is of incalculable value in regard to Christian practices.

[14] Armellini, *Gli Antichi Cimiteri,* p. 128.— Allard, *Rome Souterr.,* p. 177.

"Quae pro tanta merita (*sic*) accepit sepulchrum intra limina sanctorum, quod multi cupiun (t) et rari accipiun (t)." [15]

On account of her rare merits she was buried near the saints — a privilege which many desire and few receive.

Towards the end of the fourth century St. Gregory of Nyssa, brother of St. Basil, was sent to Arabia to there undertake some needed reforms. He visited Palestine and the holy places, and was much edified, as he testifies in his letter to Eustathia.[16] In reply to the query of a solitary of Cappadocia as to whether pilgrimages are useful, he gives some advice which at times has been misunderstood.

The Saint seems to discourage pilgrimages when he observes that when Christ invited all men to strive after the kingdom of heaven, He did not include a pilgrimage to Jerusalem as a necessary condition. But the spirit of this letter becomes evident from the context. St. Gregory reprehends those who had given themselves to a life of solitude, and then sought diversion under pretext of a pilgrimage. He points out the dangers of such a course, where religious men and women were thrown promiscuously together, and virtue was in peril by reason of the lax morality then prevalent in many parts of Palestine. He adds that he himself indeed visited the holy places, but in an official capacity, as sent by the council, and under the safe-conduct furnished by the emperor. His letter to Eustathia, however, gives a glowing account of the advantages of such a pilgrimage when undertaken in the proper spirit.[17]

[15] De Rossi, *Inscript.* i, 142.
[16] *Ep. ad Eustath. P. G.* xlvi, 1015.
[17] L. c. 1011.

It is to be observed that there were many dangers at that time, especially for monks and nuns, who were thus led from their solitudes and exposed to various distractions and temptations. Besides, the Saint laments the enormous excesses and crimes, especially murder, then rife in Palestine.[18] The large numbers of pilgrims who flocked thither from all parts of the world, the noble Roman matrons — the Paulas, the Melanias, Marcellas, Fabiolas, Eustochios — and the example and exhortations of men like St. Jerome, surely are proof of the popularity and the usefulness of such pilgrimages.[19]

The chronicles of the subsequent epochs are replete with accounts of pilgrimages from all parts of the world to Rome. Some of the more careful and thoughtful among the travellers compiled rude lists — Itineraries, De Rossi calls them — of the various places visited. These lists have been found in recent times, and have proved of invaluable help to archæologists in determining the ancient sites of many churches and cemeteries.

The custom gradually became general for each nation to have its church and hospice — for pilgrims — in Rome, near the sepulchre of St. Peter. Thus, the English had their church and *Schola Saxonum* there, built by King Ina, who in 728 went to Rome, and with permission of Gregory II erected these buildings. The hospice was by them called Burg, and the church, S. Maria in Saxia, a name which has remained to the present day in its Italian dress, S. Spirito in Sassia, and Borgo S. Spirito.[20]

[18] L. c.

[19] Cf. also Card. Orsi, *Storia della Chiesa*, xviii, 30.

[20] Cf. De Waal, *I pii luoghi del Vaticano*, p. 15. Armellini, *Chiese di Roma*, p. 772.

The vicissitudes of the Roman Catacombs have been touched upon in a previous chapter. After the remains of the martyrs began to be transferred into the city the pilgrimages to those places gradually fell off, and the channel was directed towards their new resting places. That the devotion and fervor of the faithful remained in its pristine vigor we see from the historians of the period. Even in the eleventh century St. Gregory VII reproaches a certain bishop for his remissness in visiting the holy see when, as the pontiff remarks, "every year even the newly converted peoples, men and women, from the most distant parts of the world, visit St. Peter's." [21]

In the East the abuses of Moslem rule or misrule soon prevented the pilgrims of the West from reaching the goal of their desires, the Holy Places of Palestine. Christians were captured, abused, mistreated in every way, and often put to death. The final result was that mammoth protest in the form of the Crusades, wherein Christian chivalry, piety, and courage measured strength with Moslem ferocity, hatred and cruelty. In spite of the abuses and excesses which at times disfigured and distorted the noble aims of the crusaders, it remains a fact that religion was the main inspiration of those colossal expeditions, and under the religious spirit of the leaders and of the mass of the soldiery, they became vast pilgrimages. It is not our purpose to go into the details of the Crusades. We simply mention in passing that they represent a phase of the pilgrimages of early times. Though accompanied with military display, they are nevertheless to be reckoned as a part, and an important one, of the vast stream of pilgrimages which, beginning with Mary

[21] L. ix, *ep.* i, ad Giul. Archiep. Rhotomag.

Magdalen — "who went early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre" [22] — have continued with steady volume down to the present day to visit with affectionate love and piety the various places sanctified by Our Lord and His faithful champions.

During the Middle Ages a pilgrimage was, generally speaking, a serious undertaking. It was always dangerous to life and limb by reason of the warlike spirit of the times. Moreover, the lack of order and the want of lawful protection in countless localities rendered it frequently unsafe to travel except in large companies. The rulers endeavored to obviate this danger by granting passports and safe-conducts. The laws of those times bear frequent witness to this practice. Thus Pepin, the son of Charlemagne, in a law for his Italian kingdom, declares: "Let strangers and pilgrims be given safe-conduct under our protection both on their way to Rome and other places for the veneration of the Saints, and on their return thence." [23]

Besides the places already mentioned as centers of pilgrimages, two other famous shrines deserve at least a passing notice. One of these was the resting place of the relics of St. James the Great, at Compostela, in Spain. A veritable liturgy grew up around that particular devotion. The fame of the Saint was wafted throughout Europe all during the Middle Ages, so much so that it became customary for many to make a vow to visit the shrine, much the same as in the case of Rome or Jerusalem. Even at the present day the dispensation from such a vow is a case reserved to the sovereign pontiff.[24]

[22] *John* xx, 1.

[23] *Pep. Ital. Reg. Leges.* Canciani, *Barb. Leges Antiquae*, t. i, p. 176, n. 11.

[24] In 1390 Pope Boniface IX placed the vow to visit St. James'

The chief devotional center of Catholic England was the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket, at Canterbury. Chaucer has well marked its popularity:

> . . . From every shire's ende
> Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
> The holy blisful martir for to seke,
> That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.[25]

Not alone from England did the pilgrims gather at the holy shrine but, as we learn from a prominent writer of the twelfth century, Peter of La Celle, even from France they hurried to venerate the holy remains, "as if they were attending a royal banquet and a great public celebration." [26]

Chaucer has immortalized the fame of Canterbury for English readers — a fame that received a rude shock in 1538 when Cranmer, unworthy successor of a long line of distinguished prelates, ordered the shrine desecrated and destroyed.

Now, from a merely secular point of view the mediæval pilgrimages are worthy of serious consideration. During those iron ages of martial enterprises, fierce passions, and keen animosities, there was but one curb that ever proved adequate to restrain the fury of contending ambitions — the curb of faith. The Church, cognizant of the deep faith that animated all

at Compostela on the same level with that to visit St. Peter's. A confessor was forbidden to commute or to dispense this vow, even during the Jubile Baronius, *ad an.* 1390, 2.

[25] *Cant. Tales*, l. 15–18.

[26] "Undecumque non solum Angli sed et Galli, quasi ad solemnes epulas et ad fertilissimas jubilationes concurrunt ad tumbam praedicti sancti." Petrus Cell. (afterwards bishop) ad Joan. Sarisber. *ep.* xii, l. vi.

alike in spite of sporadic eruptions, used all her power and authority to check the lawlessness and vaulting ambition of prince and potentate, as well as of the humbler believer. For graver offenses a not uncommon penance was a pilgrimage to the shrine of some great saint, or even to Rome, Jerusalem, or Compostela. If we consider all that such satisfaction entailed we cannot but admit that the effect on society at large was most salutary.

In the first place, it was duly impressed upon the penitent that the journey was a penitential one. Hence everything connected with it savored of the spirit of mortification. Even the garb frequently bespoke the nature of the pilgrim's journey.[27] To avoid as far as possible the danger of abuses and imposition the bishop would furnish the penitent with a safe-conduct, in which was described the nature of the offence to be expiated, thus acting as a perpetual reminder to the traveller that humility and abnegation were virtues to be cultivated by him. This paper also contained a request for the faithful to furnish the possessor with "lodging, fire, bread, and water." Then again the discomforts of travel were of the severest nature. Poverty and humility thus accompanied the pilgrim on his way, and he reached the shrine of the saint with feelings of contrition and compunction. The faith which enabled him to submit to such severity also strengthened him in his resolution of reform. Thus not only the individual but also society in general gained by this procedure, especially in the case of pow-

[27] Besides the penitential garb, the pilgrim had a large cross sewed to the front of his garments, if he was going to Jerusalem; an image of the Veronica, or of the Keys, if to Rome; and a shell, if on his way to Compostela. On arriving at the sanctuary, each one donned his native costume.

erful or influential persons, who were in this way brought about to correct living and thinking. Many a haughty prince and noble was thus subdued, to the great relief of his suffering subjects. Not a few lives of great sanctity dated their beginning from such pilgrimages, as Christian hagiography attests. Even in the case of those who went on pilgrimage of their own accord and out of mere piety, society was immeasurably benefited, since this all tended to make one more law-abiding and chastened. In the presence of the martyr passions were soothed, the spirit of revenge was quenched, looseness of morals was corrected, and the whole spiritual being renovated by the grace of God.

A new impetus was given to pilgrimages in the beginning of the fourteenth century.[28] It seems, according to the chroniclers, that certain aged men declared that a hundred years before many indulgences had been granted to pilgrims to Rome.[29] The reigning pontiff, Boniface VIII, took the matter under advisement, and finally yielding to the devotion of the people, proclaimed, in the Bull, *Antiquorum Fida Relatio*,[30] a general pardon, or plenary indulgence, to all those who would fulfil certain specified conditions. These were a true contrition and confession of sins, and a visit to the basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul. This visit was to be repeated for thirty days by Romans, for fifteen days by strangers.

By reason of the extraordinary rejoicing and re-

[28] Alberic of Three Fountains noted under the year 1208: "It is said that in the Roman court, this year was celebrated as the fiftieth year, the year of jubilee and remission." Cf. Pertz, *Mon. Germ. Hist.:* Script. xxiii, 889.

[29] Stefaneschi, *De Anno Jubileo.*

[30] Feb. 22, 1300.

ligious feeling, as also in imitation of the "remission" under the Jewish Covenant, this period came to be called the Jubilee, or the holy year, *Anno Santo.* "Thou . . . shalt proclaim remission to all the inhabitants of thy land: for it is the year of jubilee." [31]

The year 1300 marked an epoch in Rome. The whole world responded. About 200,000 strangers were present continuously throughout the year. It is said that the number during the year was about two million. The various states of Italy proclaimed the Truce of God. An abundant harvest and moderate prices in Rome facilitated the entertainment and comfort of the pilgrims. Perfect order was maintained in spite of the concourse. Dante is said to have been present, and to have there drawn inspiration for his description in the *Inferno,* where he likens the souls passing along the bridge of Malebolge to the vast throngs threading their way across the Ponte Sant' Angelo, in Rome.

> Come i Roman, per l'esercito molto,
> L'anno del Giubbileo su per lo ponte
> Hanno a passar la gente modo tolto;
> Che dall'un lato tutti hanno la fronte
> Verso 'l castello, e vanno a Santo Pietro,
> Dall' altra sponda vanno verso 'l Monte.[32]

[31] *Levit.* xxv, 10. In the Jewish acceptation this remission was in a material sense, of debts and servitude. In the Christian significance it was from spiritual bondage.

[32] E'en thus the Romans, when the year returns
Of Jubilee, with better speed to rid
The thronging multitudes, their means devise
For such as pass the bridge; that on one side
All front toward the castle, and approach
Saint Peter's fane, on the other toward the mount.
— Div. Comm. *Inferno,* xviii.

Fifty years later, at the instance of many, among them, St. Bridget and Petrarch, and on the plea that the average human life did not extend to one hundred years, a second Jubilee was granted by Clement VI. On Christmas 1349, the opening of the Anno Santo, nearly a million and a quarter pilgrims were present. An extra condition was added, a visit to St. John Lateran's. At the following Jubilee a visit also to St. Mary Major's was enjoined. In 1423 another Jubilee was published, and finally it was decided to hold one every twenty-five years, the custom which has been ever since followed. From 1450 to the present day — with the exception of the years 1800, 1850, 1875 — the great Jubilee has been solemnized every twenty-five years.

With regard to the pious outpourings of pilgrims from all parts of the world, it is to be noted that they have an intimate connection with the Communion of Saints, since one of the essential conditions was the visits prescribed to the relics of certain saints. The spiritual benefit accruing from these pilgrimages was incalculable. Even during the last Jubilee (1900), in spite of the changed temporal condition of the Pope, almost a million pilgrims visited the holy city. The catacombs were always a point of special interest and devotion. They witnessed for a short period a revival of the fervor and splendid faith of olden times.[33]

A brief description of some of the accessories at the various shrines may not be here out of place.[34] It

[33] The writer was privileged to be present during the whole year, and can testify to the piety and devotion of the pilgrims. The celebration in the catacombs ended on Sunday, Dec. 30, with a huge demonstration at the cemetery of St. Domitilla, closing with a procession of the Blessed Sacrament.

[34] It is commonly known that in the Middle Ages, and even

has been noted elsewhere that the *Confession* was ordinarily the tomb. At times the term was applied also to the crypt and the altar over the tomb. In a basilica there were usually two Confessions, the upper, in the church proper, and the subterranean, or lower. The stairway connecting them was called the *descensus,* or καταβὰσια.

Near the altar it was customary from early times to place lights. On this subject there seems to be some uncertainty. It does not appear that they were placed on the altar or used for liturgical purposes, at least until a later date. St. Jerome refers to a long-standing practice in the East of using lights when the gospel is read. He also notes that it was usual even in the West to have lights burning before the relics and tombs of the martyrs.[35] These lights were kept in small, sometimes even large, lamps, called *lampadaria.* With regard to the saints we find this custom almost universal both in the cemeteries as well as in the churches and shrines. True there may have been abuses in this as in other things. An example of such an abuse seems to be referred to in the thirty-fourth canon of the Council of Illiberis.[36] It is there forbidden to light candles (*cerei*) in the cemeteries. The real object of the decree is not entirely clear, but it evidently points out some abuse. St. Gregory Nazianzen in describing

earlier, certain churches and shrines enjoyed the right of sanctuary. This was similar to the ancient right of asylum among the Jews and the pagans. The temple of Apollo in the grove of Daphne, was world famous. So was St. Peter's in Rome.

[35] *Cont. Vigilant.* vii.

[36] "Cereos per diem placuit in coemeteriis non incendi: inquietandi enim spiritus sanctorum non sunt." Mansi, ii. The last part of the canon is obscure. Cf. notes in Mansi, col. 32–3. The council aims at other abuses, as when it forbids women to spend the night in vigil in the cemeteries. *Can.* 35.

the obsequies over the emperor Constantius, says that the faithful spent the whole night in psalmody and with lighted torches, "as is the custom among Christians." [37] In early times, as now, lights in religious service were used as a sign of rejoicing and not merely for illuminating purposes.[38] This is also consonant with the ancient practices of the Synagogue,[39] whence the early Church seems to have derived the use of lights on liturgical occasions. Throughout the Middle Ages, indeed, from the time of Constantine, the wealthier classes of believers were wont to leave bequests to the churches to keep a certain number of lights ever burning before some shrine or relic.[40] St. Paulinus represents the altar in the Church of St. Felix as resplendent with innumerable lamps.[41] Prudentius also testifies to this usage in Italy, Spain, and France.[42] While the *Peregrinatio Silviæ* speaks of the vast number of lights at the Mass in Jerusalem.[43]

Besides a profusion of lights we find incense used in early times in Christian worship. The Jews also made

[37] *Orat.* v, 16, *Cont. Jul. P. G.* xxxv, 683. Cf. also Eusebius, *H. E.* vi, 8, for miracles worked by Narcissus, Bishop of Jerusalem. See Rock, *Hierurg.* ii, c. 11.

[38] *Adv. Vig.* "Non ad fugandas tenebras, sed ad signum laetitiae demonstrandam." Duchesne thinks that the custom of bearing lighted tapers before the celebrant in early times has some connection with the Roman practice with regard to high dignitaries. *Ch. Worship,* 116, n. 2.

[39] Cf. III *Kings,* vii, 49; *Exodus* xxviii, 20; xxv, 31–40; *Acts* xx, 7, 8.

[40] St. Gregory M. xiv, *ep.* 14, where the saint grants much land to raise revenue to supply St. Paul's church with oil. A law is found in the *Capitular Reg. Franc.* ordering the priests to warn the people to bring lights (*luminaria*) and incense to the church. Canciani, *Barb. Leg. Antiq.* iii, 280.

[41] *Carm.* iii, *de S. Felice.*

[42] In his hymns *passim.* Cf. Περὶ Στεφ. *hym.* ii. 69, and elsewhere.

[43] *Peregrin. Silv.* Mass at Jerusalem.

profuse use of incense in their services.[44]. The Christian Church adopted this practice, with the result that we find incense prescribed in the different ceremonies. The various liturgies East and West speak of it, and it has come down to the present day.[45] In later times it became customary to incense statues, relics, and other sacred objects.[46] Constantine presented three solid gold thuribles to the Church of St. John Lateran.[47]

We also see the use of curtains hanging before the doors and altars and ornamented with sacred pictures, as of Christ, the Saints, the Passion, Ascension, descent of the Holy Ghost,[48] etc. The use of these curtains was taken from the Romans, who in turn borrowed it from the Egyptians.

Another pious practice and one quite natural, was to scatter flowers over the tombs of the martyrs. But here as elsewhere the devout Christian was obliged to use caution. For they ever endeavored to avoid not only idolatry in all its forms, but anything that even savored of idolatrous usage. The pagans were wont

[44] "Thou shalt make also an altar to burn incense . . . and Aaron shall burn sweet-smelling incense upon it."—*Exod.* xxx, 1–7.

[45] Cf. Renaudot, *Liturg. Orient.* passim. The pagans were also wont to use incense in their houses to purify and sweeten the atmosphere. There are indirect references that point to the use of incense in Christian worship even before the fourth century. Beveridge, *Codex Can. Eccl. Prim. Vind.*, 171. Also *Apoc.* viii, 3–5, and *Luke* i, 10, contain references. From a remark of Tertullian—"thura plane non emimus"—(*Apol.* 42), it would seem that in his time the custom had not been rooted in Africa. The distinctly idolatrous use made of it by the Romans may explain the difference of custom.

[46] The custom of incensing relics gave rise to the use of the censer as we have it to-day, i. e., with chains. Muratori, *Lit. Rom. Vet.* ii, 241.

[47] *Lib. Pontif.* Vita S. Silvestri.

[48] Germano, *La Casa Celimon.* 366; Rock, *Textile Fabrics*, p. 14, etc.

to place a floral wreath on the head of the deceased. Hence the Christian, in early times, sedulously shunned this practice. Some of the first Fathers, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Minutius Felix,[49] decried this practice as bordering on paganism. Yet when idolatry had received its death-blow and was fast hurrying to its extinction, other writers, as St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, and Prudentius,[50] speak of the custom of scattering flowers over the grave as a perfectly legitimate proceeding.

The gradual development of Christian forms of worship and the piety and ingenuity of the faithful, sanctioned and regulated by the Church, have evolved various other modes of honoring God's saints. The frequent, nay, continuous pilgrimages from every part of the world to the famous shrines have resulted in an interchange, so to say, and an extension of local usages until a great many practices have become universal. The pilgrimages will continue as long as there are shrines of the saints extant. The shrines will ever remain as witnesses, a living testimony, not only to the glory of the early Church, but to one of her sweetest and most consoling dogmas, the Communion of Saints.

[49] Clem. A. *Paedag.* ii, 8; Tertull. *De Cor.* x; Min. Fel. "Nec mortuos coronamus." *Octav.* xii.

[50] St. Jerome, *ep.* xxvi. Ambrose, *De Obitu Valent.*, 56. Prudent.

"Nos tuta fovebimus ossa,
Violis et fronde frequenti
Liquido spargemus odore."

— Cathem, *hym.* 4. Cf. also S. Paulinus, *carm.* xiii, 590. Cf. Aug. *De Civ. Dei,* xxii, 10.

CHAPTER VI

FESTIVALS, STATIONS, LITANIES

Christian Festivals are, on the voyage of life, like those beautiful islands that one meets on the vast expanse of the ocean — a sight to gladden and strengthen the heart.
— *Quoted by Cardinal Alimonda.*[1]

Sect. I — Festivals.

The subject of festivals is one that is intimately connected with the religious and social nature of man. The distinct note of every festival is an expression of joy and happiness. Even on those days when we commemorate the dead there is apparent a certain calm hope and assurance that they are removed from pain and suffering. This confidence produces the joyous satisfaction that in spite of our own loss, all is well with those we love. Certain occasions set aside for festivities are to be found in nearly all religions, ancient and modern. The very nature of man seems to demand a period of relaxation and rejoicing. The Jews were commanded by God to observe certain days as festive. "Three times every year you shall celebrate feasts to me." [2] The object of this command obviously was to recall their minds to the great truths of religion and of their dependence on God. Considering the dangers that surrounded them on every hand,

[1] *Dall' Alba al Tramonto*, p. 161, 4 ed.
[2] *Exod.* xxiii, 14–16; xxxiv, 22; *Deut.* xvi, 13; *Levit.* xxiii, 24.

and the fickleness that seemed to characterize their spiritual lives, such an object was not without a foundation of absolute importance. Still, the element of rejoicing was ever present.

The pagans, acting on a natural impulse, likewise instituted festivals. Recognizing the undeniable supremacy of the gods, the people endeavored to appease the divine wrath by celebrating the glories and praises of their deities. The votaries of the gods only too well carried out in practice what they believed of their false divinities. The Bacchanalia, a development of Hellenic corruption, witnessed scenes that contested with the most lecherous of the gods the palm for sensuous depravity. Though at first this stream of licentiousness fumed and struggled in vain to beat down the barrier of Roman conservative morality,[3] it finally succeeded in sweeping away the obstruction, and in engulfing the whole empire in its seething, putrid waters. Many pagan festivals of ancient times and countries were nothing more nor less than tacit permission to indulge, more than usual, the basest passions.

Still, it cannot be said that all these festivals were entirely devoid of an element of goodness. So far as we can learn, the worship of the Egyptian Isis tended frequently rather to promote the practice of morality, although even here abuses have been noted.[4] The

[3] Livy tells us that several centuries before the Christian era, the Consul Postumius denounced the Bacchanalia — a recent Grecian importation — with such severity, that the Senate ordered the arrest of all the offenders. Seven thousand were taken. Half the number of men were beheaded, while the women were tried by their own relatives, and then put to death in their own homes.— Livy, xxxix, viii, 18.

[4] A remarkable example of sacerdotal connivance at the most abominable crimes is to be found in Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, xviii, 13 (ed. Venice, 1683). Since the unfortunate lady was of high standing, the emperor Tiberius ordered the priests of Isis

great distinction was that the pagans honoring the civil virtues of their heroes raised the latter to the dignity of gods: whereas the Christians venerated the supernatural merits of the Saints.

The Church therefore did not, as she has so often been accused, become paganized through the fact that she adapted some of the pagan festivals to her own use. Rather did she recognize a definite, real need of human nature in thus externating its religious feelings. For independently of the various forms of belief, we ever find man giving outward expression to the inward sentiments of his religious nature. The Church, adopting this man into her fold, purified him from all sinfulness, and left his nature intact but elevated. Henceforth his religious aspirations, when seeking an outlet, would be guided in their joyfulness by the precepts of his newly acquired belief. He would still rejoice, he would still be festive, but after a new fashion. Instead of obscenities and carousing, he would give himself up to the joys of the spirit. Casting aside his wonted pagan actions —" idolatry, witchcrafts, enmities, dissensions, sects "— he would rejoice in " charity, peace, goodness, modesty, and chastity." [5] It requires but very little knowledge of history and of the development of Christian practices to understand how deeply prejudiced is the judgment of men who speak in all seriousness of the " gradual paganizing of the Church " [6] through her new festivals, and the devo-

to be crucified, and the statue of the goddess was cast into the Tiber. It is not without significance that the most guilty person in this deal was the high priest himself.— Cf. also Diodorus, i, 22, 6.

[5] *Gal.* v. 20–3.

[6] This is what Dr. Mayor calls it: " The gradual paganizing of the Church led, in many places, to the substitution of Christian saints for old local divinities." *Dict. of the Bible,* iii, 289.

tions to her Saints. Certain writers, even at the present day — men distinguished for learning and scholarship — seem unable to rend the veil of illusion that hangs before their mental vision when treating of the Saints of God. Having mentioned this fundamental error elsewhere, we shall here refrain from further comment.

With regard to festivals the Church thus adapted and purified from paganism and error that which these same festivals presented of natural and legitimate good; much in the same way that the goldsmith fuses a collection of old jewelry, and selecting the gold, adapts it to a nobler purpose. She also retained several Jewish festivals, and attached to them a new meaning consonant with the doctrine of Christ.[7] "In adopting these ancient festivals, the Church intended to employ them to commemorate respectively Christ and the Holy Ghost, the two terminating points of the Divine evolution which was characteristic of the new belief." [8]

According to St. Augustine there were in the Church four festivals of apostolic tradition, all pointing to the divinity of Christ. These were, the Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost.[9] Later on we find mention of Christmas and the Epiphany.[10] The

[7] "The ecclesiastical year is nothing but the combination of the two calendars, the one Jewish, the other Christian. The movable feasts correspond to the Jewish, the fixed to the Christian calendar. We must not, however, press this analogy too far. The Christians did not take over all the Jewish festivals." Duchesne, *Ch. Worship*, p. 235.

[8] Op. c. 236.

[9] *Ep.* liv, n. 1. *P. L.* xxx, 200.

[10] Even the date of Christmas was uncertain at first, if we are to believe a few early authors. In 336, however, it was mentioned as viii *kal. Jan.*, corresponding to December 25, in the Philocalian Calendar. The Orientals had previously celebrated

Church added other festivals gradually in honor of the Blessed Virgin, and the Martyrs, Apostles, Confessors, and others. Duchesne says that, "the Church of Rome seems to have celebrated no festival of the Blessed Virgin before the seventh century, when it adopted the four Byzantine festivals." [11] Still, before this time, the East commemorated the Mother of God. In the fourth century we learn that it was already customary to celebrate the feasts of St. John, St. Peter, St. Paul, St. James, and St. Stephen, while the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul on June twenty-ninth dates at least from the time of Constantine.

We know from many sources that it was customary in the provinces to celebrate anniversaries of a martyr's death. One of the most important documents on this point is the Circular Letter of the Church of Smyrna on the death of St. Polycarp. This Letter has become a classic on the subject of the Communion of the Saints. It was written by the priests of that church the year following the death of the Saint. This document goes on to say that the relics of St. Polycarp have been carefully placed away in a worthy spot, and that there the faithful will gather to celebrate his anniversary, *Natalitium* — the day of his birth to eternal glory.[12] This *Natalitium* has been consecrated by antiquity to indicate the day of a Saint's death.

The *Natalitium* was celebrated over the tomb of the martyr. By reason of the large number of distinguished dead we find many such commemorations throughout the ancient Christian world. Each com-

the Epiphany, some on the sixth, others on the tenth of January. Duchesne, op. c. 258.

[11] Op. c. 272. Purification, Annunciation, Assumption, Nativity.

[12] *Ep. Circ. Eccl. Smyrn.*, 18.

memoration naturally was at first of a local character. Certain primitive rites were observed. The faithful gathered at the tomb to venerate the relics. When possible, the Sacred Mysteries were offered, and the devout partook of the Holy Eucharist,[13] and often of a modest repast, the *agape*. After the persecution of Decius, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus visited various places (253) that had suffered, and ordered that annual commemorations be there made of the martyrs, especially local ones, that had so honored the Church. This was to be accompanied with feasts and rejoicing, and was intended also partly to withdraw the ruder classes from the pagan festivals — an object that was admirably achieved.[14] It may be noted here in passing that the bishops usually watched over these celebrations with the greatest vigilance, and forbade any but those in honor of a martyr who was a true martyr. Hence the solicitude of St. Cyprian, who writes to Tertullus to note down the days on which the confessors died in prison, and then inform him, "so that we can commemorate them with the memorials of the martyrs."[15] He also alludes elsewhere to the practice of celebrating the anniversary. "We always, as you remember, offer the Holy Sacrifice for them (Lawrence and Egnatius), as often as we celebrate the annual commemoration of the martyrs."[16]

[13] "We receive also on the days when the memory of a saint is recalled." St. Basil. *ep.* xciii. As mentioned elsewhere, there were the funeral agapes, and the *connubiales*, on occasion of a marriage. The agapes spoken of here were the *natalitiae*, and were very solemn. In time of peace they took place in church after the services. The sexes were not permitted to dine together

[14] Tillemont, *Mémoires* iii, 139.

[15] *Ep.* xxxvii, 2. *P. L.* iv, 337.

[16] *Ep.* xxxiv, 3. See S. Chrysologus, *Serm.* cxxix, *in Cyprian.* It was also customary on these days to write congratulatory letters — *epistolae festivae* — to one another.

Since the names of the martyrs were often entered on the diptychs, it soon became usual for different churches to celebrate not only their local saints, but also the more distinguished among the martyrs of other places. Thus gradually the devotion to particular saints became general and finally universal.

The faith in the martyr's power of impetration was greatly augmented by these celebrations. By coming into close contact with his remains, and thus nourishing their confidence, the faithful sought favors for themselves and others. As St. Paulinus says of St. Felix: "Let us hasten hopefully to this our great patron. With piteous mien he will hearken to our petitions; and whilst with pious trust we keep his feast, he will unite our prayers to his own most glorious merits." [17] Their confidence in the saint was increased, in a sense, when they recommended to him the souls of their departed who were buried in the same cemetery.[18] The fact is often recorded in early epigraphy that the deceased was buried on the anniversary of the saint. Hence the expressions, *Natale Domni Asterii,* or *Ante natale,* or *Postera die Marturorum* — expressions that point to the custom of solemnizing the anniversary of the martyr. It was frequently permitted to hold sacred dances on the occasion of these feasts. These, however, soon degenerated into profane spectacles, and called down the denunciations of the bishops.[19]

After the era of peace (313) comparatively few martyrs were added to the already long list and the Church began to turn her attention to the holy men and

[17] *De S. Felice, carm.* viii, 211–4. See also *carm.* iii, etc.
[18] Cf. Kirsch, *Com. of Sts.*, p. 114–6, Eng. ed.
[19] Greg. Naz. *Carm.* I. *P. G.* xxxvii, 1389; xxxv, 711.

women who died with the fame of sanctity. In this way the practice soon arose of commemorating the confessors and virgins. St. Martin of Tours was one of the first to receive this honor.

On these festival days, after the time of Constantine, the State recognized the rights of the Church, and public amusements as well as sessions of court were prohibited. Constantine had ordered the subjects of the empire to observe the Sunday, and the feasts of the martyrs were everywhere commemorated. In the course of time these festivals became very numerous, and were developed by the Church in such a way that special rites, ceremonies, and offices were instituted, until they took on the solemnity which they now present. The translation of relics, mentioned above, was also a source of new festivals: for the relics were looked upon as the body of the saint, and an annual celebration was decreed in his honor. Then the Church began to observe the anniversary of the consecration of a church.[20] This was generally a local observance. Other festivals of various kinds were added from time to time, such as those pertaining to the Cross,[21] the Relics, Angels, and to divers forms of devotion to the Blessed Virgin.[22]

[20] This idea was doubtless derived from the Jewish custom of celebrating the dedication of the Temple. It was called *Encaenia*. II *Paral.* vii, 9. On this occasion in the Christian celebration the relics were special objects of veneration. This anniversary celebration is of early origin, as Sozomenus (*H. E.* ii, 26) tells us that it was customary to thus commemorate the dedication of the *Martyrium*, the church erected on Mt Calvary in the fourth century. It is, moreover, mentioned by Etheria, in *Peregrinatio Silviae* (n. viii): "The days of dedication are kept for eight days."

[21] Holy Cross day, the fourteenth of September, dates in the East, from the fourth century. The Invention, or discovery of the Cross, May third, was celebrated in Gaul Duchesne, op. c. 274.

[22] There are also many Offices of the Passion.

This gradual diffusion of Christian festivals resulted in a large number of holidays. During the Middle Ages the people entered into the spirit of the Church in this regard. They realized that in honoring the saints they were showing reverence and gratitude to God, and also drawing down blessings upon themselves. In the eighth century Pope Adrian I had endeavored to arouse renewed fervor towards the celebrations in the cemeteries. But a new era had set in: the relics were everywhere venerated, and hence the catacombs lost their former wonted attraction for the populace. Still, the devotion on the festivals themselves did not diminish: it simply developed a new phase, and was transformed from the cemeteries to the local churches. So true is this, that in some districts we find during the year over one hundred holy days, including Sundays, and not counting feasts in local churches.[23] Ecclesiastical legislation, not to mention political changes, aimed at reducing this large number of holy days. Urban VIII (1642),[24] Benedict XIII (1727), and Pius VI succeeded in effecting a notable reduction. In France after the political storms of the Revolution but four holy days remained.

During the Middle Ages the effect of these festivals was most salutary. Not only did it cause the people to turn frequently to God, at least externally, but at the same time it tended to ameliorate their civil condition. For on these days servile work was forbidden,[25] at-

[23] In the East, in the XII century, there were sixty-six entire holy days, exclusive of Sundays, and twenty-seven half holy days. — Holweck, *Cath. Encyclop* vi, 22.

[24] Before this time the bishops could institute or abrogate local feasts. Their power has since been curtailed in this matter.

[25] Even slaves were freed from labor.— *Constit. Apost.* viii, 33. Ed. Funk. There is here a list of holidays for slaves.

tendance at Mass was, as a rule, obligatory, and the people thus enjoyed not only spiritual refreshment, but a relaxation from toil as well. Often the Truce of God was kept, and hostilities were in this way somewhat mitigated. All taken together, it served to soften the rude manners of the more uncouth and to promote finer feelings and purer thinking and living.

The civil authorities, as observed, recognized these festive days and took a hand in regulating them. The laws of the times have frequent reference to the manner of celebrating the various festivals, so that these occasions became in a sense national holidays. Thus in a law passed by Otto III, it is forbidden to institute lawsuits on Sundays or holy days.[26] Another law decrees that a freeman who works on a feast day is to lose his liberty or pay a fine: a slave is to be scourged.[27] A man who forces a servant to work on such days shall forfeit the servant.[28] All laymen are commanded to attend services on holy days: this does not exclude even those living in the country.[29] One cannot read the various codes without being convinced that Church and State worked hand in hand for the betterment of religion and society, and that as a consequence the people were imbued with the principles of morality whilst they assimilated a knowledge of civilization.

[26] Cap. i.— Canciani, *Barb. Leg. Antiq.* i, p. 234. Cf. also *Cap.* xxvi, Car. Magni, op. c. iii, 209. It is worthy of note that even the Jews were forbidden by the Christian kings to desecrate the holy days by servile work. *Leg. Visigoth.*, tit. i, 1. Canciani, iv, 190.

[27] Op. c. iv, 253, n. 3 — So in England a law of Etheldred (1008) forbids all kinds of labor and commerce, iv, 290. Later on, Canute († 1035) repeats this prohibition; p. 302, n. 12.

[28] *Leg. Ang.*, n. 42. Op. c. iv, 307.

[29] *Cap. Car. Calvi* (876), cap. viii. Canciani v, 32.

It was customary on these festal occasions to have banquets and rejoicing even as at present on Christmas Day. In the fourth century the feast of St. Peter was thus celebrated, as St. Jerome observes.[30] As in other matters, abuses often crept in, and were denounced and finally suppressed by the Church. At the same time many beautiful customs had their origin on these days.[31]

The deepest and most lasting impression was made by the Miracle Plays. In the beginning these representations took place in the church, during an interruption in the services, and were enacted by the clergy, and in Latin. They were held on the more solemn festivals. Gradually, however, they were enlarged; they were presented in verse, and in the vernacular. At first they depicted scenes from the Bible; by degrees, especially during the fourteenth century, the Miracle Plays dealt chiefly with the life and prerogatives of Our Lady. These plays were all of a religious character, and contributed in no small measure to familiarize the people with scriptural subjects as well as with the principles of morality and of Christian virtues. The plays were concerned with one of three different subjects: the Old or the New Testament, and the Saints. In the fifteenth century the Mystery Plays were numerous. They all inculcated virtue and

[30] *Ep.* xxxi *ad Eustochium.*

[31] Formerly on the feast of Pentecost thirty doves were freed in St. Peter's, and allowed to fly about. A live cock was also shown there, as a remembrance of St. Peter's denial. At Easter, flowers were showered from the roof, much the same as at present in St. Mary Major's on the feast of Our Lady of the Snow, jasmines are showered from the chapel vault. In Orvieto even now there is on Pentecost a vestige of the mediæval custom. Twelve statues, representing the Apostles, are placed on a platform built in the shape of a room. A dove is sent down over this assembly, and tongues of fire appear over their heads.

showed the punishment of vice. They were usually performed by members of an association organized for this purpose. The Passion Play has come down to the present day, and is still performed in various places of southern Europe, besides the famous one at Oberammergau. In these plays history and fiction were blended together, since the object was to present a religious scene, not a strictly historical one. History formed the groundwork upon which fancy was allowed to build according to the individual taste of the writer.[32]

In the course of time excesses crept into these celebrations, and not only were the people treated to more buffoonery than seriousness, but the performances themselves were characterized by coarseness. In a word, the play became more or less a farce on religion. Thus the feasts of Fools, of the Innocents, of the Asses, of the Subdeacons, were a mere corruption of the stately miracle plays. Frequently in these burlesques subdeacons or children held sacred dances in the church, and a boy was chosen — called, *episcopus puerorum* — who stood at the bishop's place and received episcopal honors. The Feast of Asses was perhaps the most outlandish. It was held at Rouen and at Beauvais. It consisted chiefly of a representation in costume of the patriarchs and prophets who announced to the gentiles the coming of the Savior. The central figure was Balaam seated on an ass. Sometimes, as at Beauvais, the chief figure was that of a young girl, seated on a donkey and with a child in her arms.[33] This was to represent the flight into Egypt.

[32] In 1548 the Parliament of Paris forbade the further presentation of the sacred mysteries. They soon disappeared throughout France.

[33] This feast was celebrated on Christmas, or on Jan. 14. The word (in French) *Hinham*, was frequently repeated during the

So deep a root did these performances strike in the popular imagination, that only after several centuries did the Church finally eradicate them.

The Christian festivals form one of the most potent factors in keeping men's minds and thoughts raised to things of heaven, of eternity. Since man depends to a great extent on his senses and their perceptions, the Church utilizes this medium in order that by appealing to sight and hearing she may succeed in penetrating into the secret receptacle of the soul, and there implanting her principles of morality and virtue. That she has succeeded is evidently patent to every unprejudiced student of history.

Sect. II — Stations.

It is a generally known fact that the early Christians practiced far greater severity in their daily lives than is the wont at present. Besides the heroic fortitude necessary in those times to profess the religion of Christ, we find the faithful adopting various methods of aus-

services. It resembled the bray of an ass. Here is a sample from the long hymn (?) sung at the Mass:

Ecce magnis auribus
Subjugalis filius
Asinus egregius
Asinorum dominus.

Cum aristis hordeum
Comedit et carduum,
Triticum a palea
Segregat in area.

(Refrain.)
Hez, Sire Asnes, car chantez,
Belle bouche rechignez.
Vous aurez du foin assez
Et de l'avoine a plantez.

— Lapini, *Istituzioni Liturgiche*, p. 392. Ed. Florence, 1895.

terity with themselves. One of the forms of penitential discipline to which they subjected themselves was in the matter of fasting. The words of Christ admonishing all to do penance found a ready acceptance from those valiant believers. They not only embraced this doctrine: they made it a part of their lives. The subject of penance was a fruitful source of various voluntary afflictions. Fasting appealed to the Church as a potent material means for subjugating the passions and proclivities of corrupt nature. As a result of this reflection, fasting held a prominent part in the early Christian economy.

The Jews had been wont also to fast often, in fact, they fasted every Monday and Thursday.[34] The Christian Church continued this practice with a slight modification. She substituted Wednesday and Friday for the Jewish fast, just as she made Sunday instead of Saturday the Christian holy day.[35]

Now there is extant an early work called *Pastor,* the Shepherd.[36] It was written by Hermas, who was a Christian of Rome. It is a curious and most instructive composition. The author divides his work into three books: Visions, Commandments, Similitudes. He traces the Christian doctrine and practices of his time. In the *Similitudes* he tells us that on a certain day he was giving thanks to God for His favors. The Shepherd stood beside him, and asked him why he had come so early. Hermas answered: "Because, sir, I

[34] Hence the Pharisee's boast: "I fast twice in a week." *Luke* xviii, 12.

[35] *Acts* xx, 7; I *Cor.* xvi, 2.

[36] Duchesne says that this book is, "a vast examination of conscience of the Roman Church." He believes this Hermas was a brother of Pope Pius I († 155), p. 225.

am keeping the station." "What is the station?" the Shepherd inquired. "Fasting," Hermas answered,[37] and he proceeded to explain that it was the customary fast.[38] Now this fast was precisely that which the Church prescribed for Wednesday and Friday, as Tertullian tells us.[39] This stational fast lasted usually until three o'clock in the afternoon. It gradually developed into a very solemn rite.

As regards the word Station, various derivations have been suggested by writers. Some authorities trace it to the Latin expression *statuta dies,* since there were certain fixed days on which the fasting and prayer were prescribed. Others think that it was from the nautical term, *statio,* a station, as referred to a ship that has put up for repairs and security in a port after a voyage or storm. Thus the Christians repaired to their oratories or the catacombs to fortify themselves with prayer and fasting to gain spiritual strength during the persecutions. Hence they stood — *stabant* — at the tomb of the martyrs and the altar of God.[40] Tertullian, however, one of the most elegant writers of the early Latin Church, seems to derive the term from military language. In speaking of those Christians who thought themselves dispensed, on Wednesday and Friday, from further attendance at the services after they had received Holy Communion, he reminds them that for this very reason they ought to draw closer to

[37] Hermas, *Pastor, Simil,* v, 21. *P. G.* ii, 958.

[38] The Διδαχή, or *Doctrine of the Apostles,* which probably belongs to the first century, mentions these two days of Christian fast: "You should fast on Wednesday and Saturday." Viii, 1.

[39] "Cur stationibus quartam et sextam sabbati dicamus, et jejuniis parasceven?"— *De jej.* xiv. Cf. also c. x.

[40] Cf. Moroni, *Diz. Stor. Eccl.* t. lxix, p. 281.— St. Ambrose says: "Fasts are called stations, for in this way we stand and repel the assaults of the enemy."— *Serm.* xxxvi.

God. For "if the station takes its name from the military life (for we are soldiers of God),[41] surely no joy or sorrow that can befall them will affect the station (i. e. *the duty of guarding*) of the soldiers. For joy will but render discipline more pleasant, sorrow, more painful."[42]

The Station therefore usually included fasting.[43] Usually, I say, for in later times there were certain solemn stations without fasting; for example, when the people in procession accompanied the Pope to celebrate some great festival, as during the Paschal season, or on great feast days. In the churches there were also certain parts called Stations. These were the places allotted to the penitents.[44]

From early times it was customary frequently to prolong the Friday fast until Saturday.[45] On this day was observed the Grand Vigil. It led up to the solemn celebration on Sunday.[46] During the era of persecution it was difficult to conduct the Stations with much solemnity. Nay, the greatest secrecy had to be observed to escape the keen eyes of delators or officials.

[41] II *Tim.* ii, 3.

[42] *De Orat.* xix. Elsewhere he mentions the same thing. "The soldiers, ever mindful of their oath, stand fast to their stations," i. e., their posts.— *De jej.* x. *P. L.* ii, 967 (Vírgil, *Æneid.* ix).

[43] Hence the expression, *solvere stationem,* meant *solvere jejunium.*

[44] There were four classes of penitents: the *Weepers,* who remained outside the church; the *Hearers — auditors* — the *Prostrate,* and those who stood, *Consistentes*

[45] The Saturday fast afterwards became a distinct fast, as is still seen in the observance of the Ember Days.

[46] The Early Christians were wont to hold a service early Sunday morning, sometimes before sunrise. This consisted of pious reading, prayer, and sermon. The Mass was celebrated later. Cf. Pliny, *ep.* x, 97. "They were said to be wont on a certain day to gather together before dawn, and to sing a hymn to Christ, as to God."

Still, the Station as such, was observed with prayer and fasting, as noted.

When the cloud of opposition was finally dissipated the Station became an occasion of solemn import. In the fifth century certain clerics, called *ministrales,* were appointed to serve the Masses in the stational churches. As sacred edifices became numerous the Popes selected the most famous shrines of the martyrs as churches of the Stations. In this way the number of Stations, as these places were called, was largely increased.[47] The various pontiffs endeavored to add luster to this ancient and salutary devotion, and the faithful continued to draw edification and spiritual profit from the practice. Pope Hormisdas (514) gave a distinctive touch to the ceremony by presenting the churches with large, silver, stational crosses.[48] These were carried in solemn procession on the appointed days. Gregory I (590) systematized the distribution of the Stations. He reduced the large number, ordered certain days to be retained, and determined the particular churches in which the people were to assemble before proceeding to the stational church.[49] This Pontiff also granted indulgences for all those who made the Stations. Each church had its special indulgence.[50] In this way, while not the founder of the Stations,[51] as often claimed, Gregory became the greatest promoter of this particular practice.

Briefly, the manner of performing the Stations at

[47] At present there are one hundred and one Stations, distributed throughout eighty-six days.—Moroni (t. lxix, 290–2) has a list of the Stations, churches, and indulgences for each.

[48] There was one for each ward, seven at first, then twelve.

[49] *Joan. Diac.* ii, c. 2 and 6.

[50] Moroni, l. c., n. 4.

[51] This may also be inferred from the remark of Duchesne on Pope Hilary († 468), in *Lib. Pont.* i, 246.

Rome in the time of St. Gregory, was this. On the appointed day the people gathered in a church previously determined upon. Thither the Pope proceeded, walking barefoot and accompanied by the clergy and his retinue. There he read a prayer over the assembled people. This prayer was called the Collect. Then preceded by the stational cross and singing psalms and other prayers, the whole assembly wended its way to the Station. There the litanies were recited before the altar. Then followed the Mass, during which a sermon was given to the multitude. It was precisely on these occasions that Leo I and Gregory I delivered those beautiful discourses that even now are highly esteemed for their lucidity of interpretation of the Scriptures.[52] The attending clergy received Holy Communion from the Pope, and the Station for the following day was announced.[53] A cleric then took a piece of cotton, dipped it in the oil of the altar lamp, and presented it to the Pope. The latter blessed and kissed it, and handed it to an attendant.[54] The chamberlain carefully preserved all such bits of cotton, and at the Pope's death they were placed in a pillow and deposited under his head as he lay in state. From the number of such pieces it was known how many Stations the late Pope had attended.[55]

[52] These two holy doctors usually adapted the language to the capacity of their hearers, and spoke the Latin of the time. This accounts for the apparent barbarisms sometimes to be met with in their homilies, especially in those of St. Gregory.

[53] "Crastina die veniente Statio erit in ecclesia Sancti N." The choir answered: "Deo gratias."

[54] This custom of preserving a piece of cotton dipped in the oil at a Saint's tomb is still observed in parts of Southern Europe.

[55] Many customs arose in connection with the Stations. Thus on the fourth Sunday of Lent the Pope attended the Station at the Church of the Holy Cross. There took place the ceremony

The vicissitudes of Time have caused much of the outward pomp connected with the Stations to disappear. Still, many indulgences were added from time to time, and even at the present day the Stations in Rome are frequented regularly by many pious persons. The churches still continue on these occasions to make a display of their sacred relics, and the substance of the Stations remains.

Sect. III — Litanies.

The Litany[56] as a form of prayer is very ancient. It should not be thought, however, that in its present form it has come down to us from the apostolic age. The very fact that many later saints are mentioned in it precludes such an origin, at least in its entirety. We shall endeavor briefly to trace the development of the Litany down to its present state.

The word Litany is derived from the Greek λιτή, a supplication, prayer. The origin of the present Litany may be said to be reducible to the single invocation, *Kyrie eleison*, Lord, have mercy. It is not possible to state precisely when the expression was first used, but as Monsignor Magani says: "It would seem that an ejaculation so natural to the human heart, so frequently mentioned in the Psalms, so often addressed to Our Lord in asking His help, must have been in

of the Golden Rose. This was a rose of solid gold and ornamented with precious stones. It was blessed and presented by the Pope to some distinguished person, or to a city or government, in acknowledgment of their devotion to the Holy See. In later times these roses became very elaborate, and sometimes weighed twenty pounds of gold.— Formerly it was also customary on the Saturday after Easter to bless and distribute the Agnus Deis, in the stational church of St. John Lateran.

[56] By the Litany here spoken of is meant chiefly that of the Saints.

daily use among the first Christians."[57] Still, there are no known documents to prove this conjecture. What we do know is that in very early times the Orientals began to make use of the expression in their prayers, and then in the Liturgy itself. It is found in several ancient liturgies of the East. In the Syrian Liturgy of the fourth century after the various persons — catechumens, energumens, penitents — who are not allowed to be present at the Mass, have been dismissed, the people prostrate themselves towards the East, and the deacon recites the litaniacal petitions. "For the peace and welfare of the world. . . . For the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. . . . For the sick. . . . For those who have gone astray," etc. At the end of each petition the deacon paused, and the congregation answered, *Kyrie eleison*, Lord, have mercy.[58] The expression, *Te rogamus, audi nos* (We beseech Thee, hear us), was also in early use, and was shortly afterwards added to the former expression.[59]

The actual form therefore of the Litany would seem to have been at first a mere repetition of the *Kyrie eleison,* frequently following the petitions mentioned above. This form is still seen in the Greek liturgies; that of Constantinople even now prescribes a Litany to be said before the priest enters to say Mass. The Roman Church early had the same practice, but it has now practically disappeared,[60] and is recalled to mind by the *Kyrie* shortly after the beginning of the Mass. The *Christe eleison* is also said, though this was a later

[57] *L'Antica Lit. Rom.* i, 123.
[58] Duchesne, *Ch. Worship*, p. 59 (ed. 1904).
[59] It appears about the VIII century, but evidently is much older.
[60] The Litany is still said on Holy Saturday.

importation, as St. Gregory tells us, and not used by the Greeks.[61]

The further development of the Litany and the addition of the names of saints cannot be traced to any particular year. The saints seem to figure here principally with the beginnings of the Stations. St. John Chrysostom has an allusion to such prayers in connection with public processions in time of calamity. He tells us that, "A storm arose, and litanies (λιτανεῖαι) and supplications were offered up, and the whole city, as a torrent, hastened to the shrines of the Apostles; we implored our advocates, St. Peter and Blessed Andrew, the Apostles, and Paul and Timothy."[62] While we cannot say that this prayer was a Litany in the present sense of the term, it points to the fact that the belief in the intercession of the saints was strong, and that it materialized in public invocation to them: a sort of crude Litany.

Moreover, we know that from an early period the practice was introduced of adding to the diptychs the names of the principal martyrs. We have seen also that the Fathers were wont to direct their invocations to the glorious heroes of the persecutions, and in later times, to the saints who departed this life without the shedding of blood. Whence it is not improbable that this faith in the saints, developing along the lines of invocation, may have taken on the form of litaniacal supplication. A few writers also profess to see a connection between this later development and the pagan practice of invoking their gods. The Roman *indigitamenta* are similar in form to the Litany. The Fetiales in announcing war, exclaimed: "Hear, O Jupiter,

[61] St. Greg. M. l. ix, *ep.* 12.
[62] Hom. *cont. ludos et theatra*, n. 5.

and thou, O Juno: Quirinus, and all ye gods of heaven, of earth, and under the earth, hear ye." [63]

This question is so intimately bound up with the origin of the Stations that for its solution it depends on the latter. The Stations are mentioned before the era of peace. Tertullian, for example, alludes to them, remarking that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for a woman married to an infidel to take part in them [64] In the fourth century the Arians were forbidden their stational processions in which they chanted Litanies.[65] We can safely say then that the Litany was in use, at least in a simple form, from the third century. Gradual developments gave it its present form. Since the Stations assumed a distinct position under Gregory I, so do the Litanies here begin to look familiar from a modern viewpoint. St. Gregory held a special service in Rome (Aug. 30, 590) to pray God to put an end to the pestilence then raging. The people were divided into seven classes, each group leaving from a different church, and all directing their steps towards St. Mary Major. This procession was called *Litania Septiformis*, and was different from the Major Litany which was held on April 25, to offset the pagan *Robigalia*.[66] The Minor Litanies were those held on the three days before the Ascension. They were called Rogations. This practice was introduced into Rome by Pope Leo III (795–816),[67] though they had previously been adopted in other places. St. Mamertus is said to have inaugurated them in Vienne (V cen-

[63] Cf. Magani, op. c. p. 130.
[64] *Ad Uxor* ii, 4.
[65] Soz. *H. E.* viii, 8; Socrat. *H. E.* vi, 8.
[66] For a description of the route taken in the procession on April 25, cf. Duchesne, *Ch. Wor.*, 288.
[67] Duchesne, *Lib. Pont.* ii, 35, n. 17.

tury), and they became general in France by order of the first council of Orleans (511).

Once the Litany of the Saints became popular, many other similar formulas of prayers came forth, and were received with not indifferent interest. There is a good example quoted by Duchesne in the *Liber Pontificalis.* It was found in a psalter of the time of Charlemagne, and is called *Laudes,* or Praises. Below is a brief example.

Christ conquers, Christ reigns, Christ rules (*thrice*).
Christ, graciously hear us! Life to Pope Leo, universal Pontiff.
Savior of the world, do Thou assist him.
St. Peter, Paul, Clement, etc., do thou assist him.
Christ, graciously hear us! Life and victory to Charles, most high, great and peaceful king of the Franks and Lombards, Roman patrician, and crowned by God!
Redeemer of the world, do Thou assist him.
Holy Mary, St. Michael, etc., do thou assist him.
Christ, graciously hear us! To all the officers and the whole army of the French, life and victory!
St. Hilary, do thou assist them.
St. Martin, etc., do thou assist them.

Kyrie eleison (*thrice*).
Happiness! Happiness!
All success and prosperity!
For many years! Amen.[68]

It must be observed that these Litanies are used for joyful occasions as well as for days of fast, like the Rogations. The various kinds of Litanies were finally reduced in number, until at present there are but five

[68] Op. c. ii, 37. Paris, 1892.

that are approved for public use.[69] From time to time and for different reasons various new invocations have been added to the Litanies, principally on account of calamity or misfortune.

Considered in its touching appeal and confidence in God and His saints, the Litany might well have been wafted down the ages from the very beginning of Christianity. History does not claim this: but history shows that it breathes the spirit of the Church from the very cradle of our creed.

[69] Holy Name, Sacred Heart, All Saints, Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph. There are other Litanies in private use.

APPENDIX

Decree on Invocation and Veneration, and on the Relics of the Saints, and sacred images. (*Conc. Trident., sess.* XXV).

The holy Synod commands all bishops and those engaged in teaching and in the care of souls, that according to the usage of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, from the beginning of Christianity, as well as the uniform consent of the Fathers, and the decrees of the sacred Councils, they sedulously instruct the faithful concerning the intercession and invocation of the Saints, the honor due to Relics, and the lawful use of Images. Let them teach that the Saints who are reigning with Christ, offer their prayers to God for men; that it is good and useful humbly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, help, and assistance in order to obtain favors from God through His Son Jesus Christ, Our Lord, who alone is our Redeemer and Savior. They who deny that the Saints in heaven, enjoying eternal happiness, are to be invoked, or who affirm that they do not pray for men, or that it is idolatry to invoke their help even for the individual, or that this is repugnant to the Word of God and is opposed to the honor due the one Mediator of God and men, Jesus Christ, or that it is foolish mentally or orally to invoke those who are in heaven — such persons assert what is impious.

The holy remains of the martyrs and others reigning with Christ were the living members of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit, and shall be raised up by Him and glorified unto life eternal: as such they are to be

venerated by the faithful. For by means of these remains many favors are granted to men by God. Likewise they are to be condemned who affirm that veneration and honor should not be given to the Relics of the Saints; or that these Relics and other like remembrances are useless as objects of veneration; or that it is vain to visit the shrines of the Saints to there implore assistance. Such persons have already been condemned by the Church, and she hereby condemns them anew.

Moreover, the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of other Saints, are to be preserved especially in the churches. They are to be surrounded with all due honor and veneration. Not that we believe that they possess anything of the divinity, or any special virtue to entitle them to this worship: or that we should ask them anything: or that any trust should be placed in the image itself, as formerly the pagans did, who centered their hope in idols. But the honor which is exhibited is referred to the original which is hereby represented. Thus through the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover and kneel, we adore Christ, and we venerate the Saints whose likeness they express. This was sanctioned by the Councils, and especially by the decrees of the Second Nicene Synod against those who opposed sacred images.

Let the bishops carefully teach that through the history of the mysteries of our redemption, expressed by pictures or other likenesses, the people are instructed and strengthened in the remembrance and recollection of the articles of Faith. Great fruit is derived from the use of all kinds of sacred images, not only because the people are thereby reminded of the benefits and graces conferred upon them by Christ: but also because the miracles wrought by God through the Saints, as well as holy examples, are thus placed before their very eyes. This

tends to cause them to return thanks to God, to order their lives and conduct in imitation of the Saints, to adore and to love God, and to practice piety. If any one teach or hold anything contrary to these decrees: let him be anathema.

The holy Synod ardently desires that if any abuses have crept in against these salutary admonitions, they be at once eradicated; in order that no images of false pretense, furnishing an occasion of danger to the simple, be erected. If it sometimes happens that histories and Scriptural narratives, useful to the illiterate, are thus expressed, let the people be warned that for this reason they should not believe that the divinity can be viewed with bodily eyes, or that it can be represented in color or figure. Let all abuses at once be removed with regard to the invocation of Saints, the veneration of Relics, and the use of Sacred Images; let every mercenary practice be eliminated; let all immodesty be shunned, both in depicting and in adorning images. Men should not make use of the celebrations in honor of the Saints and the visits to the Relics, to give themselves up to eating and drinking, as if feast days were to be celebrated by excessive indulgence and immodesty. Finally, let the bishops use such care and diligence about these things, that nothing improper, preposterous, profane, or disgraceful, appear; for, "holiness becometh the house of God."[1]

In order that these decrees be the more faithfully observed, the holy Synod commands that without the permission of the bishop, no one be allowed to erect or to cause to be erected in a church or any other place, even exempted, any image of an unwonted character. No new miracles are to be received, no new Relics to be accepted, without the approbation of the bishop. When

[1] *Ps.* xcii.

such things occur, he will confer with theologians and other pious men, and shall decide what is agreeable to truth and piety. If there should arise a doubtful abuse, or one difficult of solution, or any question of serious moment, the bishop shall await the decision of the Metropolitan and the bishops of the province in a provincial council, before proceeding to a solution of the point at issue. At the same time nothing shall be done without the consent of the Roman Pontiff, or contrary to the received use of the Church.

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